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THE FOX

NEW YORK 1976 $3.00

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IN PUBLISHING THIS ISSUE OF THE FOX WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS AND THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

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THE LUMPEN-HEADACHE

PETER BENCHLEY

INTRODUCTION

The Art & Language 'group' is responsible for the publication of this magazine. There is a group (or, rather, according to some "a party") in England and a group in the USA.
In the USA, the 'group'—some of the members think of it as a "political party", still others "as a kind of union", or even just "a looser collective"—consists of at least (so I am told) the following persons: Michael Corris, Joseph Kosuth, Sarah Charlesworth, Karl Beveridge, Christine Kozlov, Ian Burn, Carole Conde, Mel Ramsden, Andrew Menard, Preston Heller, Jill Breakstone, Mayo Thompson, Nigel Lendon, Alex Hay et alia. At least, these are the persons who attended the Art & Language meetings I attended. Some of these persons have strong ties to the "old" Art & Language group. Some are more or less peripherally involved and, seemingly fortunate for their sanity it seems to me, actually have interests elsewhere. Everybody has a 'high' art history.

Whatever else this group of persons might agree on (and I'm sure it wouldn't be much) they would all probably agree that the daily events of the group as a group bear certain strong resemblances to a soap-opera. Calamity leap-frogs dizzying and relentless psychodrama; the 'social atmosphere'—especially at group 'get togethers' ("struggle-sessions" as some members of the group call them) is frequently torpid. There is no discipline and people misunderstand the simplest things. To paraphrase a remark originally used to describe *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*, "almost all of the characters are completely confused".

It seemed to me peculiarly commendable that nobody in the group tried to hide this confusion. In fact, many saw the inter-group 'problems' as attributable to capitalism and their solution to lie "in developing socialist consciousness". The entire group however, is not eager to adopt "doctrinaire Marxist-Leninism". Some seek a "working methodology" in perhaps more nebulous "but also more encompassing alternatives". This minority holds that "social change is not something abstract which happens exclusively at the point of production, as embodied in the antagonism between social classes"; it is indeed this they argue, but "it is also a complete social and cultural process which involves changing values, assumptions, attitudes, interpersonal-social (class) relationships all along the way". Now whatever this may mean, apparently everybody agrees that some 'critical' purchase on the group's "internal pandemonium" would be instructive not only for themselves, but for others also—hence the initial idea of doing these transcripts.

Many members of the non-proletariat intelligentsia would not be caught dead saying they "oppose capitalism". Instead they use abstract terms to designate the target of their criticism. They say "the bureaucratic society". They base their criticism, in other words, not on capitalism as shaped by economic factors, on history, but rather on individual moral critique, on 'choice' or phenomenological 'awareness'.

All members of the Art & Language group see the artist's traditional role to be one of "servicing the success story of outside history—ruling class history." It is this history which has "stolen creativity from the masses". Some persons within A & L apparently see themselves as a kind of "non-proletariat petty-bourgeois revolutionary" (sic). Not a stereotype

revolutionary but "a real figure—the living embodiment of the contradictions of the society which shaped her or him". I think this is noticably implausible, however, they arrive at this conclusion based on the following (also not very plausible) 'new-left' analyses: "intellectuals in capitalist society were previously not involved in the direct production of surplus value. Before capitalism transformed 'knowledge' into an industry—a direct productive force—intellectuals, including artists, were privileged not to be the immediate object of rulers and manipulators. The overall growth in number of the intelligentsia leads, in the context of monopoly capitalist society, to the emergence of what might be termed 'surplus intelligentsia'. This surplus intelligentsia is, despite its own historical role as 'conscience of society' and in better days preserver and guardian of 'progress' in bourgeois culture and science, now turning into a kind of 'partial' worker employed in one or another sector of material or non-material production. That is, the intelligentsia—so this argument goes—must now make a contract with the capitalist entrepreneur and become a 'unit' in the labor market. Such an individual is no longer bourgeois and not proletarian, they are, in other words, a kind of *lumpen-bourgeoise*."

Whatever the historical worth of this analysis, it is surely true that art and artists are in big trouble. Many artists wish to 'return' (and some even consider it their 'right' to return) to being once again a non-commited individual hovering freely above the heads of ordinary mortals. But today this is picturesque. The 'lone craftsman's' non-alienation always ended as soon as they came into contact with the market with which they were forced to enter into a buying and selling relationship. Under monopoly capitalism this 'free' activity finally itself becomes 'moulded' by the demand for the supply of 'non-material' commodities for the capitalist market. Considering this as, in fact, an accurate view, today's artist is really a pathetically deluded figure—a figure insisting on the quaintest of 'rights', rights which long ago ceased to have any resemblance to historical reality and which quite possibly never did. The gulf between the artist's consciousness and actual being conceals from him or her the contradictory position of being 'free creator' and 'exploited employee'.

This view informs Art & Language. They say the middle class 'struggle' has no progressive base but must be "brought into line with the true historical possibilities of the revolutionary proletariat". Thus certain members of the group confided in me that they thought of themselves as "Kamikazi artists" and suggested they were all working towards some sort of flamboyant professional suicide—"a decent society wouldn't need professional creators like us". This kind of weirdly adventuristic chatter seemed to frequently mask a kind of dilletante-ish indolence. Whatever, many individuals in 'the art-world' share this dissatisfaction. This has become most apparent since the growth of The Artist's Meeting For Cultural Change. One individual in A & L criticized the AMCC by saying "we need to go further than intellectual discontent, our actions have to emerge rather as converted manifestations of the proletariat". It is evidence of the deep rifts within A & L that upon relating this remark, someone countered by stating that "this 'workeritis' is reactionary to the core.
It is romantic self-aggrandizement and actually presents the greatest obstacle to real social transformation" .

The following transcripts are full of dead-end thinking and bourgeois pessimism. At stake was an understanding of capitalism as a complex social structure based on historically shaped economic factors, an understanding often given instead to counter-cultural exotica. Those flirting with this exotica often overlooked the positive aspects of Marxism. One attitude was that "Marxist-Leninism constituted 'a beaten-path' which, though a useful tool for analysis, was potentially deterministic and 'uncreative'". Actually, all of the members of Art & Language share a contradictory position, a sorry existential gulf between their actual existence within the system of capitalist social production and their consciousness or apprehension of that existence.

For what do these "Lumpens", the purveyors of 'expensive' creativity, know about 'revolution'? Revolution is a practical activity embodied in the activity of the working class.

It cannot be trusted to free-floating rationalizers-sociologists, art-critics, anthropologists, aestheticians, These 'expensive' individuals make it abstract and use it to modify and jazz-up the conceptual frameworks of tedious culture-mongers (like sociologists, anthropologists, etc.). As J. P. Sartre said: "Marxism is not an abstract haze of exotic contrasts, it is the proletariat as the incarnation and vehicle of an idea". Of course, it must be remembered that it takes an intellectual and a French intellectual no less to recognize something like this in the first place.

What follows are my edited transcripts of the group's proceedings during three "struggle sessions" (sic) at the close of February, 1976, There were seven such sessions in all. I selected the first and the last two. Two of the participants have strongly protested my selections. They insist that "the re-formation of the group which appears in Part 3 does not stem directly from the discussions reproduced here. On the contrary, crucial to that split are the intervening meetings which discussed at length such topics as internal group hierarchy, feminism, male-chauvinism, etc." These same participants also insisted that "although ideological differences play their part, it is significant that methodological and personal conflicts which have been and still are rampant in the group, often are the point at which 'ideological struggle' became deadlocked".

One final point bears on the use of names. Certain individuals did not want their names used—something which I never quite understood though assumed it had to do with protection of public image. Still, I decided to drop real names and instead each participant has been given the appropriate genus, species, or trivial name of a freshwater tropical fish.

Just prior to the time I left the group, they were voting to form a splinter group known as (Provisional) Art & Language. Others wanted instead to "locate their study in a less methodological prescriptive program". Finally, in terms of *realism* I had hoped the transcripts would provide much more, During the sessions I began to think they might provide a kind of 'surface realism'. I now consider them to be no more than a kind of 'collective hallucination'. If you can, read between the lines.

Scarsdale, New York

PART I

Pongo Pongo began by being boorish: "Who wants to throw a dead rabbit on the table? We all use the expression 'social change'—what do we mean by it?" Now this seemingly constructive comment was instantly sidetracked by someone who wondered "if these transcripts were going in *The Fox*?"

Jarbua said—"I think there is a danger in too much position taking and not enough dialogue. People *can* change their minds".

Pongo Pongo went on to say, "Let's stop talking about the structure and get on and deal with things ideologically … you cannot talk about *cultural* change—it has been said—separate from *social* change. Given that we are in a funny class niche, what kind of change can we work for—given our class situation, and: is our class-situation, i.e., 'artistes', an *apriori*? 'Change' is not a matter of an idealistic blueprint needing only the details filled in by 'good-hearted' support … "

Oscellatus suggested that "we must look at what is unique about our situation. The fact is that we're artists, we're living in America in 1976, the urban nightmare, etc., we might be able to understand what's unique about our situation by maintaining what kind of society we would like to have, What kind of society we want and how would that society deal with our work. In other words, start from our work and consider the kind of society we want.

A lot of the objections are formulated along the lines that the work is dependent upon (this) society for its meaning. The work is meaningless now because the society is meaningless, so perhaps, starting from the point of our work and thinking 'how would you want people to react' …. and what you would want your work to *mean* and how can we work on changing society accordingly … "

Pongo Pongo said, "That's all backwards cos' there's only one alternative and that's *socialism*, cos' that's the only thing that's powerful enough to constitute a *real* alternative… "

Jarbua: "How do you know that?"

Pongo Pongo: Because I look around and see a lot of socialists and not much else that's organized … and historically *real*".

Oscellatus: "Well, we've had Communists in this country as long as Russia has … it hasn't been changed. What are we going to add to it that would help?"

Punkay: "The historical situation is different. Social change and cultural change are bound up with the fact that we are a bourgeois organisation. Are we going to invest the bourgeoisie with revolutionary potential? Historically speaking, are we going to engage in a middle-class holding formation of some kind? If we are starting from our work then you are opting for cultural rather than social change because you've already determined the relation between your work and society. You've decided that's how you will mediate between culture and society . You can't have real cultural change without real social change. We're a bourgeois service organisation working for the edification of the ruling-class—which leaves the middle-class untouched (the lower middle-class) and the rest of the people untouched … " [This took some time to sink in …]

Clarius: " … social transformation has to take the form of socialism … I think it's a natural form … but we're trapped by our work" [This didn't seem to help the sinking-in …]

Jarbua: "I don't think it clarifies too much to say we are working for socialism. What we mean when we are talking about socialism and how we see that coming about is really critical to whether we can agree that we're working for socialism. If we're talking about socialism as defined by the 19th C. utopian socialists, which is the most utopian, then I agree with their socialism. The question comes down to whether we're going to work for revolution, *regardless* of what that means, in the most expedient of ways … which I think a lot of people here are interested in. I think we need a definition of socialism that provides the conditions for the kind of society we really want, that would be genuinely liberating. I'm not interested in working for a dictatorship of the proletariat. I am interested in working for a society that would be truly egalitarian which has a whole different basis of social relations, that confronts the problems of capitalism, specifically the problem of profit making which I don't think that socialism necessarily does confront—unless we work that into the definition. And I think there are other problems, such as sexism and racism that are very much part of the problem, that just talking about the role of the working-class doesn't help clarify."

Ramirezi: "You mentioned 19th century utopian socialism and you agreed with them. Well, socialism is an historic process that has been studied and worked upon since early 19th century. Those socialists made an essential step which was to 'formulate' the possibility of transforming society and addressing society to those problems, and it has scientifically been advanced through application, through historic confrontation with the ruling class … and dealing with the problems that those confrontations force. Essentially, for us to ignore the history of socialism and 'decide' that we can ignore the problems of the dictatorship of the proletariat and characterise them as merely formal ways of dealing with things that are not satisfactory to us is to ignore a certain amount of *historical realism* which is absolutely essential to our position". [uproar]

"I just want to finish this one point about the dictatorship of the proletariat: *it is not up to us*. The working class will change things, will transform society. It isn't up to us to 'choose' whether the dictatorship of the proletariat is a 'good idea' or a 'bad idea', except insofar as we can work with it in mind. We have

to keep it in mind on the grounds that it is a necessary transitional formation, and it does…"

Jarbua: "Says who? … God? … or Karl Marx, or Lenin?'

Ramirezi: "Says history."

Pongo Pongo: "The dictatorship of the proletariat does not mean that the proletariat dresses up like Nazi storm-troopers to go goose-stepping about … it means, and it is a frightening term to some people, that all of the working people rise armed and defeat the state".

Oscellatus: "If one wants to look for concrete historical examples, look at the world. Look at the existing societies that we would conceivably want to emulate … we *must* respond to the specificity of our own situation… "

Metae: "You're looking at them as models … we can't … "

Oscellatus: "When I was talking about socialism I wasn't talking about any models we have, I was talking about a new model."

Puntius Stigma: "I would think also you would have to look at socialism historically not abstractly … "

Punkay: "It's very difficult to think of the US solely in terms of migrant berry pickers. They are about the only people who would apply to a 'classical' Marxist-Leninist sorting out of our society. For the US you have to change the 'rules' of 'classical' Marxist-Leninism … "

Ramirezi: "We're not talking about 'classical Marxist application'. I do not think of Marxism as a model, or a chart that you can hold up … "

Oscellatus: "As an absolute fact?"

Ramirezi: "… it's not something that you hold up and see whether it matches up. It's not a system. You don't have your Marxist-society-transforming-kit. It's a dialectical process. It's history and history is the thing you can learn the most from and it generates certain kinds of relations that are unavoidable. There's a problem with people talking about socialism as a *thing*.

Puntius Stigma: "It is a process which has many stages and if you're looking at the existing socialist countries you're looking at countries at different stages of socialism or 'into' socialism. In fact Russia sort of probably made one step into socialism and half a step back and never went any further. It is a *process*. Socialism simply means that one re-organises the social relations of the society. That doesn't mean that you immediately get rid of bourgeois ideology. You have a series of cultural revolutions within that period of socialism in order to actually make the superstructure fit the re-organization of the base productive forces."

Punkay: "I can agree with what you're saying; but I think you have to be careful about using terms like the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' because they have a very specific meaning in terms of their use in this country."

Puntius Stigma: "We're all trying to say that you can't ignore the real history of socialism, but let's learn from it.

Punkay: .. [Socialist positions] show us how material conditions have coalesced to produce the proper strategies of socialism which are [likely to be] most successful. While we can't 'formulate' them we can certainly avoid them in the sense that we're not about to have a Bolshevik revolution. In terms of what models you have to look at you have to consider the economic development of the place … e.g., say, self-management in Yugoslavia is essentially impossible to conceive of without the devastation of the Yugoslav industrial base during WWII. The prospect of socialism was there because of the relatively weak bourgeois opposition to the nationalisation of industry. If we're dealing with the complex problem of American socialism then we have to take into consideration the corporate nature of the economic base. That suggests some lines towards self-management because (it's) predicated much more on a local rather than a nationally organised thrust. You might have to work from a position of fragmentation towards coalescence rather than from a position of national unity. For the sake of others understanding ing of this conversation (we) ought to choose terminology more carefully because it seems most people are sensitive to that terminology."

Pongo Pongo: "Unless we begin to realise things like class and race and the dictatorship of the proletariat as *realities*, and stop skirting them we're not going to get anywhere or even

penetrate capitalist language hegemony."

Oscellatus: "But are they realities?"

Jarbua: "We haven't heard how it *is* a reality. "

Albifrons: "You can't separate socialism from the fact that the world is dominated by imperialist forces both in Russia and the US. Also, whoever is against the Dictatorship of the Proletariat: who should be in control other than the workers? Who should be the ones who can see what is necessary?"

Jarbua: "I'm opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat per se. I don't think it's a question of who should be in control *other* than the proletariat, it's a question of *every* person in the society sharing in the control of that society."

Pongo Pongo: "A proletarian, or a person who, in being proletarianised' occupies a particular place in modes of production, where he or she is [vulnerable to] exploitation by entrepreneurs. It doesn't mean you work in a factory. You have to look at the way capitalism develops. There is an appropriation of profit areas such as culture. Science has moved so that scientists are no longer 'free experimenters', they now work for big companies (or the state). All of these people have had some of their power stolen and are getting more of it stolen. [May this] be a kind of proletarianisation?"

Puntius Stigma: "They've had their power stolen insofar as they are being organised by the state. This is a power *independent* of a person, it is only by *fulfilling a role* that you 'achieve' power … "

Bellica: "You seem to feel that drawing the line between who 'is' proletariat and who 'is not' is like drawing a line between those who are interested and those who are not."

Jarbua: "Artists, you seem to consider, are proletariat insofar as they are working, producing … and that dealers, critics and so on, all the so-called 'parasites' of the art world are solidly indexed to the ruling-class, that they are the cultural bosses. Now I think that's very problematic. Those people are equally alienated and exploited by the system. Someone said that because they functioned in a role which (amounts) to functioning as the rationalizers of culture they must be considered *the enemy*. I think they do rationalise culture but they're not the enemy, they're people. They come from the same class background as we do, they're victims of the system in the same fucking way we are."

Bellica: "If that's true men are just as oppressed as women."

Jarbua: " … artists are *more* oppressed than critics and dealers, but critics are also oppressed! There's a difference between Geldzahler and Rubin, and Lucy Lippard … "

Puntius Stigma: "We're talking of a chain of power … "

Oscellatus: "It depends on where you find yourself in the pyramid—the power flows through us."

Ramirezi: "It's not a *pyramid*, it's a *base* and *superstructure* with 'lines'—it does not go up to a point."

Albifrons: "You seem to forget that Golda Meir and Mrs. Ghandhi are functioning the same way men do. You cannot put women in men's jobs and get 'equality' that way."

Pongo Pongo: "The way the society functions is as a set of power relations *independent* of *who* occupies the roles. A feminist president won't mean a thing. Geldzahler and Lippard are basically the same in terms of their power roles, even though Lucy is 'good', they're still both entrepreneurs. The power structure is there—I'm talking about a sense of class, a sense of socialism—on a large scale. I happen to like Lucy too."

Badis Badis: "Where do you draw the line between the oppressed and the oppressors? There are times when artists have power … at what point does Carl Andre become an artist who is oppressed and at what point does he become an oppressor? Where do *we* draw the line?"

Ramirezi: "Well, the only way I can think of 'drawing the line' is in the jobs that these people do and the way the social relations bear down on them … "

Clarius: "I don't think you can talk about, drawing a line. We have a system in this country which everybody more or less has to adhere to; People at the top have more privilege certainly but you can't really draw the line, so that makes it difficult to define the proletariat in

this country."

Ramirezi: "That's if you think that 'the proletariat' is a matter of sorting out things phenomenologically. "

Puntius Stigma: "You have to look at the *role*. If Geldzahler was to try to work with us he would have to give up his job. There's a difference between that and Lucy who has some relationships to production. The fact that the section of production is defined superstructurally obviously has to be kept in mind. But I think you have to draw the line."

Pongo Pongo: "You're worrying about setting up absolutes. This is capitalism: there are no 'good people', you have to make *ad hoc* decisions. If you are a revolutionary, running down the street with a gun, you have to make some *ad hoc* decisions about who you're aiming at … the guy in the Cadillac, smoking a cigar, you shoot."

Ramirezi: "Certain things are very clear: you don't see derelicts lurching down the street in mink coats." [Unlike in Paris]

Jarbua: "There is a problem, in defining the revolutionary class according to social roles. Some workers are reactionary. There's a difference between the Means of production and social roles. There are some younger critics and entrepreneurs who have interests close to ours. A lot of artists are in opposition to the proletariat. So, if you are going to make a distinction based on their categorical relation to the means of production you're just wrong. Artists are producers but not therefore proletarian or subject to proletarianisation."

Badis Badis: "If you're working for socialism, you are the proletariat. Therefore, anyone who isn't working in that direction is an oppressor. In other words, proletarianisation doesn't have to do with possessing credentials or fundamental endowments but with a true socialist direction … "

Pongo Pongo: "I think the basic problem for us is whether we go on with a negative relation to capitalism, or with a positive relation to socialism, socialist history."

Punkay: "Well, is a positive relation to socialism dependent on determining class structure in a quantitive way, or is it an *opportunist* frame of reference? Is it possible for us to draw a theoretical base around class structure or, in that question, can we only have a negative relation to capitalism?"

Ramirezi: "I would say that all the formations we make, all the strategy, all the work we do is predicated on, in every instance, some sort of transcendental idealism, Our work and our social relations offer us the possibility of participating in the complex of strategies for transforming society. We all want to think—this is the transcendentally idealistic part—that it is possible for us to *really act*. We know that we are bourgeois and that we are 'in' a social section. Our job is not only to figure out who is a member of the working class or who is a member of the ruling class—our job is also to create on a practical level a certain amount of theoretical havoc so that a core of rationality does not appear out of nowhere, out of our conversations with ourselves and with other people… that, if you like, is what our job can be, given the fact, say, of transcendental idealism. It's a job of constant (class analytical) short-circuiting (of) social relations based on capitalist taxonomy—certain categories can't be 'saved.'

Metae: "Art' can't be saved … "

Oscellatus: "You mean the category 'class' can't be saved."

Ramirezi: "You mean 'class' is a category; I don't think that just because we cannot see clear-cut phenomenological evidence that a working class exists in the US does not mean it does not exist."

Pongo Pongo: "The psychology of the working class does not believe that it is a working class, but we are talking—must talk—about the actual material conditions people are in and [whether] they are in a position of being proletarianized … "

Bellica: "I want to know who 'they' are?"

Bellica: "If we are dealing with class-struggle then the issue of feminism is important. So is racism, because most of the people who take 'classical' working-class jobs are frequently determined along race lines or gender lines. The issues of racism and sexism should come 'out front'."

Jarbua: I agree. One of the reasons sexism is crucial is that there's been an assumption, one part of Marxist analysis, that when you

say 'working-class' you mean the industrial working-class and their relation to the means of production … The majority of the women in this country have no economic power whatsoever and they can be considered [the] proletariat on the basis of their relation to the means of production. So women as a class, if you can talk about them as a class are very much part of the proletariat struggle, and blacks, as a class, as well."

Ramirezi: "How are you going to substantiate them as a class?"

Jarbua: "I don't care if you call them a class or a social section."

Multifasciata: "I think we can no longer determine class-structure economically. The working-class could be instead those who have no control over their time, have no mobility, then we have the intelligentsia with limited time and limited mobility, then we have the ruling class—who determine their own time and their own mobility."

Jarbua: "What about what I said about women, they have little control and little mobility … "

Multifasciata : "Yes, but there are working, middle, and ruling-class women … there is a real difference between a black woman and Happy Rockefeller."

Puntius Stigma: "Until someone comes up with an analysis, we can't get anywhere with that argument … "

Metae: "Are you 'saying that women are universally oppressed?"

Jarbua: "Well not universally."

Puntius Stigma: "Surely that's no more helpful than saying that men are universally oppressed … "

Albifrons: "I think that feminism is an important issue for us. I think an important question is, have women always been in an oppressed state? And I think we can answer this by saying, no, they haven't. It comes out of the emergence of a class system and women were placed in a function within that class system."

Bellica: "Anthropologically, that's not true. Women were oppressed long before the class system arose."

[much uproar]

Bellica: "I'm not saying that women were always oppressed, in the Caribbean, in places, women have a certain amount of economic power, but in many societies where class doesn't exist women were nonetheless oppressed…"

Pongo Pongo: "I'd like to say something: we seem to be getting to the point of getting a lot of potted knowledge shoved in here."

Metae: "We've got nothing … nil over the last hour … "

Puntius Stigma: "Well it may or may not be true that in all societies women have been oppressed. The argument is weakened unless you can say *every* society oppressed women. We have to look at the problems of racism in relation to the kinds of production, in an historical sense, that we are living under, which is capitalism, If we are going to talk about sexism, we can't talk in terms of women becoming better capitalists. A shift in consciousness, without implying an integration of that into the total social climate .. ,"

Jaculator: "Yeah, but you have to understand that for women, 'becoming better capitalists', that is, increasing their economic power may be 'reformist' in the long run, but in the short run it may have a very strong effect on their ability to have some control and reflect the power they have gotten,"

Puntius Stigma: "OK, that's one step back in order to take two forward. That's OK, but how is it different [from] men doing the same thing?"

Ramirezi: "We seem to be talking about the working class who 'don't know they are oppressed'. In class terms in terms of the class-struggle, bourgeois women's liberation movements do not have class awareness, they are in fact against transformational terms, But we have an historic situation where we are thinking about social transformation for large groups of people who are not thinking about it in the ways we are trying to do, and I think there are reformist women's groups and their attitudes are opposed to Marxism, and the same obtains for blacks, You are going to find women who don't think that class struggle is part of the woman's problems/oppression, That's a good index of our direction, who our allies are and who our enemies are."

Oscellatus: "I just want to interrupt and

remind us that this conversation has to do with the appropriateness of classical Marxist-Leninism to us, and this country, where we find ourselves and how close to the line of the beaten path we want to go and how much do we have to learn from that as well as from other areas and forge our own direction based on our own reality … "

Pongo Pongo: **"Why don't we 'go around the table' on that, and I would like to start … "**

Badis Badis: **"I want to remind you that 'women' are being brought up here because of the problem we've had with socialist groups where men had the main base of power, and I just wanted to remind you and warn you all in a sense that women have a double oppression which we will keep reminding you of."**

Pongo Pongo: **"I would like to say that it's good that it keeps coming up, and I don't mean to be patronising, but it totally throws me. I have no theoretical purchase on the concept of women as a class at all. Also, I think that the earlier reference to classical Marxist-Leninism should be explained. It is not a 'beaten path' and it isn't a 'formula for success'. It says look at your own situation but here are some theoretical and above all historical-mater ial guides. We have to use Marxist-Leninism to inform our actions. But, I don't think using this means that it logically follows that we will end up with 'Russia'. We will use it in our daily practice, to inform our daily practice. It's not an abstract academic pursuit … "**

Clarius: **"Using Marxist-Leninism could be a detriment in terms of our acceptability in the US but if we work with it, and we have to, it's one of the models, it would be a great advantage in terms of acceptance … "**

Ramirezi: **"But do you think it's just a matter of finding the right combination of disciplines in order to sort problems out in this country?"**

Clarius: **"I don't know quite what you mean when you say that—we learn from a lot of things, that's all."**

Ramirezi: **"How do you propose to transform society?"**

Oscellatus: **"Well it's *much* easier to follow—a beaten path. What I'm suggesting is the difficult way, not the easy one .. ,"**

Ramirezi: **"What do you think the role of socialism is. You call it 'a beaten path' … ?**

Oscellatus: **"I don't say socialism—I said Marxist-Leninism.**

Ramirezi: **"We're talking about our relation to the class struggle."**

Punkay: **"WHAT does a socialist program *entail* … Marxist-Leninist or fucking avant-garde Leftist … say what it entails: 'radical democracy', 'decentralisation' … I can't keep up with this crappy stuff … "**

Ramirezi: **"I am 'for' the dictatorship of the proletariat on the grounds that it's an historical necessity, its implementation at every level is needed to overthrow the state. The power of it is that it organises the social relations. The transformation that we are working for is that there will be a classless society, i.e., there will be base relations. People to people … whatever superstructural 'constructs' are made will be on an ongoing project basis. These superstructural relations will obtain for the amount of time that they are useful and they will be then superceded, the supercession will be *built into them*, and we are working towards, as humans, a functional state of constant flux, and our relationship to that problem is the possible power we have. To bring anything to bear on that problem is directly related to how well we can sort out our relationship to the class struggle as it exists as an historic process; and dialectics can be recognised, not 'employed'. One thing about the co-equal problem of feminism: women are oppressed—I agree, but I think feminism must be sorted out on socialist terms."**

Metae: **"The glaring situation is that there are a lot of personal relations mediated by oppression. What I would like to see happen is a bringing-together of social relations … real ones … and cultural ones. But even talking of 'artist' implicitly denies the creative potential of other work. The only form of analysis that I can apply to that with any free space ahead of it is Marxist-Leninist class analysis whatever modified way it pertains to particular situations."**

Punkay: **''I'm not sure I can add anything at this point, except, we can't approach socialism as capitalists approach capitalism, and that is as 'nature.' That means we can't snugly fit with the tradition of socialism which, for**

Americans is a tradition of failures. In that sense we have to start bailing out of Marxist-Leninist positions insofar as they connote a history which we cannot depend upon, which means, for example, that Maoism 'contradicts' Leninism which means that Mao's (positions) are embedded in the history of China. What sticks out in my mind is the need for radical decentralisation through which we can arrive at a series of *ad hoc* programs to deal with peoples needs, community interests determining relations, rather than the reverse. It might make our discussions easier if we stop relying on a tradition which is of no use to us. Capitalists can be innovative because they've got the thrust of 'nature' behind them—they're working from capitalism outward. We're not working from socialism outward, so we have a negative relation to capitalism and nothing else."

Clarius: "In terms of roles, I've dropped my role as an artist, or rather I've dropped my working as an artist. I like what was just said. But where does the relationship to the rest of the world begin, the human race oppresses the whole earth. The longevity of all that exists must be considered. Marxism-Leninism is a prime model. But society based on Marxism could still go right along oppressing the whole earth. "

Hypostomus: "I'm not sure if racism is among the topics to be discussed. Given the make-up of this group it ought to be. Nobody's defined socialism, and I can't. I can't speak of it realistically at all. I think this week is important especially if we speak of the group's social relations. Talk about 'transforming society.' If there's any honesty in this group, the history of the relations, especially in the last year are extremely important. I mean this could be quite a painful week for some people in this room. If we speak of collaboration, male-female relations, hierarchy in the group, then the shit will hit the fan. If we are going to work towards transforming society we really have to talk about transforming relations within *this group*."

Bellica: "I have a series of questions: how can the middle-class revolutionize itself and, though we may speak of basic socialist principles, how do you change modes of production? Then we seem to be limited to ideology or the superstructure? I don't know how we can change the infrastructure, that is, the modes of production. It seems by our activity we are confined to superstructural change? We have to decide whether superstructural change has a strategic relation to infrastructural change. That is, our principles are complicated by the fact that we are complicatedly confined to the superstructure and if we go on about socialism in any other than a qualified way … because certainly our reflexivity is basically about how the middle class can revolutionise itself, since that's what we all are. There's been a reason for the emphasis on Imperalism: its one of the roles of High Art, but its also superstructural, and the questioning of 'consciousness' is also superstructural, and its a kind of *cul-de-sac*: how do we get past those kinds of considerations? If we are so confined, what does it mean?"

Pongo Pongo: "All good questions."

Puntius Stigma: "Funny none of them came up before?"

Jarbua: "I'm really confused about our relation to Marxism-Leninism. A problem I have is that Marxist-Leninist's analysis becomes equated with realism. I think we must realise that Marx's analysis of capitalist dynamics is very crucial to our comprehension of our situation. There's a certain kind of determinism in assuming the working-class will rise up and seize the means of production and at that point the classless society will come into existence and everything will be groovy. We have to concentrate on 'oppressive dynamics' and there's more to oppression than material oppression. There's psychological, sexual, racial oppression, and these are crucially important. And we can't go on about socialism equalling some kind of ideal state without clarifying for ourselves what we want out of socialism and what we think it could mean. I don't think that means we should be unrealistic about it. I think realism is absolutely crucial. But I don't think we should equate realism with Marxism. We should look around and see what's happening. Marxist-Leninism overestimates class struggle and underestimates social ideals, values, all things informing social movement and change. I think there is a role for cultural change in bringing about social change. I don't think the two can be separated. "

Pongo Pongo: "Well think the question is what do we do. I don't think its a matter of defining Marxist-Leninism or not.

I think that many people around this table know fuck-all about Marx or Lenin, and I think they are doing a lot of talking. It's presumptuous if you don't know much 'about it, Nobody's talking about ramming socialism down peoples throat. Lenin alluded to one not being able to 'sell' people socialism. Some of us are speaking as if we're going to offer it up for purchase like a packet of Fab. Socialism's not an abstract thing. If it is, it's safe. It is *here right now*. It's a weapon. You cannot view socialism as a disenchanted, alienated, 'moral' intellectual. You have to understand it materially insofar as it's to fight for … material things. It's a war. It's not something to alienate yourself from, reify, then interpret. Being an intellectual and able to 'interpret' is a problem in itself. Our relation to the rest of the world is that we will say we will fight historically where we can for socialism. Socialism won't cure all ills. It will have to maintain industry though it may prevent profit which devours the earth by capital's expansion. You must see revolution and socialism as *now*, and ourselves as allied but not part of the base-class. Revolution doesn't 'occur' like Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. I also think we've got to get the psychology of this group to a point where we can view it dialectically as a market-capitalist function. The distinction between superstructure and base which people have gone on about is fundamental to us. People haven't spoken of its *real content* but instead we deal, (just like fucking artists) with cultural bliks. We are restricted to ideology-superstructure. However one area of capitalist exploitation is now on this superstructural level. How can we, as petty-bourgeoise per-form a revolutionary function except insofar as we correlate our cultural demands with the economic and social demands of the base-class?"

PART 2

Ramirezi: "We've been talking about unity and a lot of terminology has been bandied about. I've tried all week long to make clear that we are involved in a socialist process, something with which we have an active, ongoing relationship. This informs our actions in some ways that maybe we don't even know the 'effect' of yet. One issue in this group has really been a hot potato: the 'dictatorship of the proletariat,' and all the problems that go along with an acceptance of class-struggle, that socialist struggle is the *reality* of our situation if we're thinking in terms of a socialist transformation." I think our position is in a social section of the superstructure. It is not an authentic base we can transport full-blown all over the international proletariat. I think our historical projectivity is toward the economic base. What do I expect from this group? I don't have any expectations from this group. I think it's unrealistic, in a sense, to anticipate. I have some working relations, that's all. These are determined by what we think it is proper to do, and I don't mean 'proper' in terms of any index which is out of control, I mean *realism*. What is realism? It's not a matter of definition. What do we do? What is it possible. for us to do realistically? Go out and work. Some of the work we do reproduces capitalist social relations, some work we do fucks this up for an instant. I'm interested in the work that fucks it up."

Puntius Stigma: "It strikes me that we have finished having organization without clear ideological direction. Most of us can't stomach that way of going-on. There is a certain 'inevitability' about how we have to now go on. Something we haven't done in the past is take our form of organization very seriously. That's been a disaster. We've had, really, a *laissez-faire* organization. In terms of the work in and out of *The Fox*, I believe we've gone as far as possible with *laissez-faire*. Either we stand still and have a non-progressive group, or we take organization seriously."

Jarbua: "Or both."

Puntius Stigma: "There have been arguments for several years against adopting a more progressive organization. The arguments have always been 'the rights of individuals' against a [fear of a] sort of 'group council." At this time this is becoming contradictory to any ideology we claim to be holding down. It seems to be inevitable that we loose the individualization of the work. What I would like to see is work start to all come out as Art & Language, without names, that includes articles and shows. I want, also, a mandate that you *can't* do things as an individual. That makes the sociality into exploitation. This would mean a group of people would criticize [and struggle over] all work that goes out under the rubric, Art & Language. That would, for the first time, give us a real critical framework amongst ourselves. It seems inevitable that in such matters the group will have to prevail. This means all public work. If I'm writing something with Art& Language rather than my own name on it, that would, might, get rid of the individualistic tendency to imply 'look how much I know!' This seems to be healthy, to get the credit away from the individual. This individualism is not very productive in the group. It sets up competition and, worse, sets up a special [fetishized perhaps] relation with what is written. Now, there is a problem with the existing hierarchy within the group in terms of work put out under just 'Art& Language.' To a certain extent credit would accrue to those already established, thus reinforcing 'the hierarchy. But, in the long run, this kind of work would deconstruct the hierarchy, particularly if things began to emerge through commonality, *from the center of this table*. An immediate effect—well at present there's too much work, and too little dialogue—would be less work, but the work would be more *principled*."

Pongo Pongo: "The space in these struggle sessions has been very confrontational: what I see as the problem is that we seem to have a unique and looney combination of socialist ideals with bourgeois practice. I see that we must close in or break up into smaller cadres. The reason is that if socialism means anything to us it cannot be just theoretical, abstract. It must be something we put into practice. We have to put up or shut up. This group is plagued with typical bourgeois politics. That is, things go on secretly, covertly: all of these things must go on in order to make us 'feasible' in the capitalist world. We have to stop this and the only way to do that is to collectivize the incoming information. That would put a brake on hierarchy reinforcement. 'Tighter' group control of work just means not that there is no 'individual' work, but that *the group* [party or whatever] mediates publically rather than the individual. We have to work in the artworld, but that work we do there must attempt, through the development of contradiction perhaps, to advance the base class historically. That is, 'our' history is class history not isolated personal 'creative' history. It should be work which denies the artworld its crutch of rationality … "

Metae: Whatever expectations we have can't be 'ends,' but 'means' that are directed toward a known 'end.' This is socialism. Socialism and its analysis plus what we can learn from history will inform those means. We act as artists because that's where we've been socialized. I would think that the overall task of artists is to eliminate the hegemony that we 'professionals' have over creativity. But we also act as people and as socialists. Our social relations are based on the assumptions of an ideological position. Our strategic objectives are obviously demystification and harassment of the social section we are dumped into. The question of a model and model-making came up earIier. Also, someone said our social relations might be our most radical relations. But I think it's dangerous to pride

ourselves about that … It's socialism we're talking about, not socialization and that's important. We don't want to fetishize and reify these internal social relations! If you ask 'is the right to be independent lost through mutual criticism and control?' (with the stress on *control*)—well, what I think is lost is the authority implicitly conferred upon individuals by their identification with this group which has been called *false solidarity* [which I took to mean 'solidarity' for individual ends]. The last thing I have to ask is the question 'what prevents people from working together?'. First, perhaps when the ideological relations between them isn't *clear*. It can't be made clear by assertion but it has to be made clear through the manifestations of work and the results of working together."

Jarbua: "Well, I must say I'm not sorted out at all. I see the process we're involved in now, the socialist process, as an ideological process, and I think the hope of us reaching ideological unity at this point is a vain one. I don't think collectives begin with an ideologically competitive situation and then produce work together, and I don't think we can surrender our individualism at this point because we do not have ideological unity I think ideological unity has to *precede* that, and I do not see the basis for ideological unity. At this point we need to build a context in that direction by examination of ideological issues.Obviously, since I see myself in an ideological minority at this point, I can see that to surrender my individuality to the group at this point is to put myself into a coercive situation. I feel working in groups and collectives is important now, but I would like to work with a group with which I felt ideological solidarity and social solidarity. I can't surrender my rights to express myself as an individual, to work with other individuals with whom I feel some solidarity. I think, also, that a lot of the ideological conflicts … well, I think that bourgeois pressures towards success are now producing revolutionary-heroes just as they [once did and still do] produce bourgeois reactionaries. Talking about giving up the right to work as individuals at this point, for some people is a lot easier because they have already been successful as individuals and have an ability to be socially effective that right now I certainly don't have. I'm in a position now where I couldn't get a teaching job, whereas a lot of people here already have teaching jobs. Teaching is something I've been always interested in. It's not about artworld success, it's the desire to work in a non-coercive situation."

Punkay: "In the 'Thin Man', Nick Charles asks himself a question about his involvement in a murder case. The question is: 'Where am I going and what am I doing?' and the answer is 'effectively nowhere and nothing'.

[uproar, some applause.]

"This week we've all formally recognized that this group has long passed the point of being an art-group, an informal, polite, intellectual jousting group, and long goes toward being a socialist instrument, a party. I think, in respect to that, we must stop couching ourselves exclusively in institutional terms. One is bringing up points, not as 'requirements for membership,' but in the hope of some sort of *consolidation*. I think this is all leading to a situation where we can support each other's re-education and in that respect I don't understand the phrase 'surrender one's individuality' I think in some sense we have to give up our precious bourgeois rights to thought. I'll just iterate some practical points about supporting re-education along socialist lines. Group criticism of work; Group resolve to go on conversationally—and I'm doing this in increasing order of difficulty or approachability—collective work; expansion of publications and public activities, including teaching workshops; a move toward 'thematic' gallery shows; a move toward the collectivisation of income; a move toward non-participation in cultural institutions such as museums, and in general I guess an eventual withdrawal from the market and bourgeois art history. I do think in one sense that we've oversaturated our artworld strategies and we have to stop reprimanding the bourgeoisie in strictly upper-class terms. I hope that point is very clear. The high-art world is dedicated to the conservation of the ruling-class. We have to recognize the stratification of culture in order to get out of the exclusive high-art domain. The 'new' history of Art & Language is emerging. It is not an

annexation of the old, but a transformation."

Hypostomus: "Consolidation is essential. 'Frightening' is not the right word, but it will force us to drop bourgeois values. I do not think I can work with everyone in this group, on ideological grounds. But I'm willing to try and work on whatever collective projects we might sort out. Everyone should proceed on good faith. Information coming in is important. I agree that all shows should go out as Art & Language, but I don't know if the credit will accrue to the same old individuals. One problem is that information will come in through the old address and I, speaking personally, will continue to be in a situation where information is handed second-hand to me. One of the reasons I've chosen to work in a sub-group is that I would like to find some way of not getting information second-hand … "

Pongo Pongo: "Oh come on."

Hypostomus: "No, it's an important point. It has a lot to do with the hierarchy. I feel that we want to adopt a more progressive form of organization but what we are adopting is perhaps the easier points of organization. These points may appear trivial, but I don't want them to be overlooked."

Albifrons: "I did not come to these meetings because of a negative relation to capitalism. I already had a negative relation to capitalism from my experiences of artworld politiking and its oppression of women. That's my historical embeddedness in the class-struggle. I do not view my relation to the group as a strategic relation to the means of production. Only by sorting out our own historical relation to the economic base can we see our possible relations to the class-struggle. Working towards a classless society will humanize social relations and gain some normative coherence in society. Working toward non-institutional regionalism and communities make possible a non-exploitive relationship with nature … pass … "

Bellica: "Out."

Oscellatus: "I wrote something: a kind of response-to-Channel 4-editorial-style, so please forgive: The economic, social, and psychological motives are propelling some of us toward a socialist program along lines that can transform in an immediate way our specific living and working context into a more equitable and beneficial arrangement. While these short-term means are important on the same human grounds that we have elected a long-term strategy for socialism, they do nevertheless constitute a kind of operational reformism insofar as they attempt to make life in the capitalist system acceptable. I know that may sound self-servingly absurd to some of us, but it loses its absurdity when concretized in terms of our lives—be it giving up grants, trips to Europe, posh teaching jobs in sunny climates, real estate holdings, exhibitions, or whatever. No one has shown how we can be a socialist island in a capitalist sea. There is a need, however, for us to practice what we preach. The question is, on what level can we all agree for that practice to exist. Further, we must be careful of how closely we connect the short-term needs with the long-term strategy. Hopefully, the short-term won't eclipse the long-term, but provide work that will guide and teach us. 'Ideology' is becoming a justification for a variety of motives, often, it is simply 'liberal guilt'. We must be flexible about which currents of socialist thought inform our actions. We must be able to change and accept that process of re-education as continually ongoing. I suggest we form a political party. Some among us have a problematic relation to art which belonging to 'an art group' makes very difficult. Our party would inform our work, whatever form it takes. This would allow others to join us ….. in political exchange and its practice—be it cultural or social. I don't understand why we should keep Art & Language? Keeping it for some of us is a form of keeping their individual identity, and if particular individuals are asked to give up the power they have in the artworld as individuals, then I think those whose individuality in the artworld rests upon the mantle 'Art & Language' should also be forced to change similarly. Otherwise we will just end up with more authoritarianism along the same old hierarchal lines … "

Bellica: "Collectivization, to me, corresponds to a greater vulnerability to each other, thus a greater chance to learn from each other. Now that won't happen, in fact, unless there is a closer form of ideological agreement. There

seems to be a confusion as to how our social relations will connect up with socialism. If we do move toward a more principled ideology there will actually be less tendency to concentrate on the psycho-dramas within the group, because I think most of our energy has been directed toward the group. Now if this move toward solidarity occurs, then I think the group itself will become *less* important. In a sense, then, this solidarity is a move towards deconstruction of our own psycho-dramas. There's been some talk about 'sociality as strategy'. I find that odd. Who brought up Bakunin's 'the group attempting to bring about revolutionary change must itself be the embodiment of that revolutionary change'? The means are the same as the end. This is teleological. I don't think we should concentrate on working in the high-art world. That's the most 'iffy' issue here for me. To go on criticizing galleries is essentially a dead end kind of strategy which isn't going to get socialism very far. We should try and generate new forms for us to work within which connect with a different set of people. Specifically, 'the workers'. But we've got to start approaching them on *their* terms, not from above, on our terms. They don't listen to what we have to say and we don't listen to what they have to say. Because when we're not communicating dialectically—it's 'them' and 'us'. "

Ramirezi: "You spoke of a socialist island in a capitalist sea. I don't think we're speaking of a utopian island, but rather attempting to function in the world with an understanding of what socialism is. You also mentioned 'liberal guilt' … well the bourgeoisie *is* guilty. Also, I don't want to talk about 'saving nature' in bourgeois, liberal terms. That's how come nature is in the mess it's in … the whole ecology crap … "

Oscellatus: "I think some of us are giving the kiss of authenticity to whatever we say by calling it 'ideology'."

Clarius: "I haven't seen any ideological togetherness but I'm waiting for it … "

Puntius Stigma: "But you are making a split between organization and ideology. You can't. The form' of organization is important and an aspect of the ideology … "

Clarius: "I agree."

Puntius Stigma: "The liberalism rampant in this fucking group is a function of liberal organisation—basically, and you have to take it [organization] seriously."

Clarius: "You think I don't take it seriously?"

Puntius Stigma: "Well, you made a split."

Clarius: "I think it is a split … what you're saying is that it ought to be together, but isn't at present. I didn't mean what you thought I meant."

Oscellatus: "Again, I want to iterate something. I don't understand why we would keep the name Art & Language. We need neutral territory …

Pongo Pongo: "Chairman, can we go around the table?"

Hypostomus: "If we're making a radical break in organization, this might be the time to drop that name. It would also help break down the Art & Language hierarchy … it might be a good idea."

Bellica: "I'd be curious how people stand, can we go around the table … "

Metae: "Are we going around the table? Okay, if we can transform our relations, the ideology to which we 'relate', then the fact that Art & Language can transform itself could *kill* the past histories."

Bellica: "So did Chou En Lai!"

Metae: "That would be a point in favour of doing something with Art & Language. If we simply start another organization, which is what happened when *The Fox* was born, then the same people would be singled out. So, I think the point of demonstrably *transforming* the organization might have a far greater effect."

Badis Badis: "But if we can actually transform it … What would happen if we dropped Art & Language?"

Ramirezi: "We would dissolve it …..

Puntius Stigma: "We would be known as 'the former Art & Language' … "

Metae: "If we can keep it and de-construct that history … "

Oscellatus: "Everything we do will be viewed in art-historical terms … "

Puntius Stigma: "Please!"

Badis Badis: "I have a problem with labels. I've said to a number of people I have a problem being called 'a mother', so my prob-

lems are my problems. Who gives a shit if Leo Castelli phones so and so. That's not what this group is about. We are going-on out of the artworld, so who gives a shit. We're not out for artworld recognition!"

Jarbua: "I'm not clear: many people mention 'no names' and doing all work under Art & Language. Now I have a lot of problems with the way this is being said. I think it's fine for us to do work together, and we should emphasize the importance of doing work together as Art & Language without stressing our individuality. But the consistent problem I have with it … I mean once you accept socialism as a historic reality, individual opportunism becomes less and less a factor propelling individual work. Individual opportunism becomes like a negative virtue in a way. But my reason for being interested in the importance of individuals being able to work as individuals is it allows people to speak of things outside of the agreed upon Art & Language ideology, to make contacts with people who they share non-A&L ideological concerns. When I wrote in *The Fox*, I got criticism from a number of women which I found very helpful and I made contact. It's not about success, it's about making contact with other people … that's a big problem, though I am interested in individual freedom to explore other ways of operating."

Bellica: "Okay, what has that to do with the adoption or not of the Art & Language logos?"

Jarbua: "Okay, I am willing (and I think it's important) to spend a large part of my time working on Art & Language projects without asking for credit or money. But I also feel that for me, right now, the freedom to act as an individual to form other contacts with other groups and individuals—or even write an article under my own name … "

Bellica: "Wait a minute: Why would you write an article under your own name if in fact you're working with other groups?"

Jarbua: "Well, if I write an article under my own name then I'm in a position to make contact with other people who are interested in the same things. I don't see socialism as a coercive dynamic, it has to be a co-operative dynamic and the co-operation goes in lots of different ways."

Bellica: "I do not feel coerced by the logos Art & Language, and not using my own name."

Jarbua: "Well I said I did because I'm in a minority. Maybe it's a point at which I can no longer work with Art & Language. I need to work with other people. That's possible, if everyone else wants to work exclusively as Art & Language. But when teaching is going on, say in San Diego, like how can he represent in San Diego my beliefs? I don't think until there's ideological solidarity in the group."

Metae: "Can I make a point … can we stick to the topic?"

Jarbua: "I'd like to … "

Bellica: . "Yeah, the logos Art & Language, are you for or against it?"

Jarbua: "Oh, I thought this had to do with what went on earlier."

Puntius Stigma: "To say 'Art & Language', does that mean all of your identity is with the group?"

Bellica: "Of course not."

Jarbua: "I'm not ready to say logos or no logos … "

Bellica: We have to stop dealing with the outside world on their own terms. We have to challenge those terms, and as realistically as possible. I think even the notion of individual teaching jobs has to be questioned. Certain steps in that direction have been made by us … and they were positive. It doesn't matter a fuck about the name, it's the organization that's important. Make the new organizational form explicit. To respond to the misgivings: If a uniform public face is adopted that doesn't mean people can't respond to particular content, and each of us here would know best who to answer those responses, without resorting to individual name tags."

Ramirezi: "Well the logos is a premature problem for me, but in a certain sense it is one of the ideological bones of contention and we have to sort out a relationship to it in order to figure out if we are in fact going-on: so it's a double edged problem: history will be made somehow, no matter what. We're also talking about changing the thrust of the group and making some 'new' history: we're talking about strategically superceding the problems that A&L has been to us, and that strategic

supercession is, to place valuation on the point of production—insofar as we are now talking about a 'different kind' of social projectivity toward the economic base. So what we have should not fall into that old distinction: Changing the form of the group and thinking that's going to be a responsive change in the *content*. It is, rather, that we are trying to find some way of mediating our internal relations, and make a more accurate reflection as to what we can do about our situation strategically. Col-Iective work does in no way presuppose a loss of response: if Art & Language becomes Art & Language Kamikazi or whatever, then we name the change in public … we make a point of it, we're strategically superceding … and re-valuing our relationships to the points of production. We're changing emphasis toward the economic base and that's the idcological crux of the problem for this group; which is why we're talking about keeping it together."

Hypostonlus: "I think the logos, Art & Language should be changed, but maybe it's irrelevant … "

Albifrons: "I think we have to stop opportunism and hierarchy. But I don't think we can worry or care about those who know and take seriously that hierarchy. I don't think the New York *Times* matters and'I think keeping the name is stronger because I think that those people who know about A&L should see the changes as concrete and strong. They are strong and they should be able to see how the group has matured and unified itself and I think that things have come out here which show it isn't unified.

Oscellatus: "Well, I can't say I'm convinced about the arguments for keeping the logos. It seems contradictory to other views. It seems that particular individuals have a vested interest in Art & Language. I can't see how can I throw myself into work that will finally accrue to Pongo Pongo and Puntius Stigma. That may be the wrong attitude, but it seems one is asking an awful lot. We're artists based in the artworld. As Pincus-Witten said, 'going through a Maoist stage'. Unless we really start all over again, it's still just a radical reform of the old art group and if it's a new situation let's make it a *really* new situation. The only other way out of this is a political party. We will all belong to the party. Some of us may be plumbers, or carpenters, or artists, or electricians, or whatever, but we would all be informed by the party. Then Art & Language would exist along old lines, but it would be interesting to see how the party would affect that group. I can't see keeping A&L, and making this change. I can't see that as a fair proposal. "

Metae: "If we don't demonstrably kill Art & Language history, it will remain as currency for the artworld."

Pongo Pongo: "Are you saying we have to use the new work to kill the old work. That if you simply 'renounce' the old work it would be reified even more?"

Metae: "Yes."

Oscellatus: "That supports my argument."

Pongo Pongo: "I'm saying that to abandon Art & Language is to leave it intact. We're getting down to how we *don't* leave it intact. What was just said does leave it intact and actually moves the problematicity to a safer distance. "

Bellica: "Let's go on … "

Puntius Stigma: "I have to say I'm suspicious: Changing the name is a declaration of change which doesn't necessarily imply any real change. In those terms, it's a classic American tactic: change the name of your company in order to clear up your tax problems. I'm more interested in changing the fuckin organization. I don't care. It would seem instead of changing the logos Art & Language, that if some are worried about the New York *Times* calling me, then I will change *my* name. The real problem is to sort out our relationship to our history and I don't see changing the name as significant. Changing your name doesn't change your history and we do have embeddedness in our histories. I fail to see the significance of the issue."

Punkay: "Why fuckin argue. It's so dumb! It's incredibly stupid! There's a problem with histories, but in a short time we'll be poison in the artworld."

Badis Badis: "Those who get artworld credit ratings are going to be in real trouble."

Pongo Pongo: "Are we going to 'change the name' every time someone new comes in?"

Multifasciata: "Some want to change the

name? What would the group be called? What could function better? There's strength in making no issue out of it. I can't really take the issue seriously."

Oscellatus: "There was a reason we didn't call *The Fox*, *Art-Language*."

Albifrons: "This is stupid … "

Puntius Stigma: "I don't *care* about it."

Pongo Pongo: "Why the fuck are we talking about this? People get screwed up. Poor old egos. We're worried about people getting credit … *shit*. If the name gets dissolved then they are going to enter the group through the individuals they already know. Who are they going to call? The best known individuals! This new group will have no group work, no group history, nothing. It's just going to have a Box number. Well we do have a group and we do have a collective history that's strong and must be continued. I don't care, change the name to 'Fred'."

Puntius Stigma: "I would like to make a point that this whole issue is highly diversionary. I would like to get back to the point of how we can organize and then this conversation might have something approaching a *real* basis. It's bizarre: we're already changing the name of something that doesn't yet exist."

Oscellatus: "I'm sorry, I think it's important. We've talked about shows, galleries—why not this?"

Puntius Stigma: "But first, let's look at the base for unity."

Punkay: "Socialism is the prism for our disorganization or organization for those who care to stay. Then that's the way it goes: I suggest we discuss this as an issue … "

Pongo Pongo: "I would like to modify that to say: what is the possibly mad relation between the artist and socialism, in this world."

Bellica: "How do our actions relate to the base or superstructure? We may talk about collectivity, but base and superstructure?

Pongo Pongo: "What we tend to do when we talk about socialism is to forget *who we are*. We seem to forget that we are here and have a job to get on with. I think what's happened is that the looming theory and practice of socialism brought out splits and disagreement which we then promptly forgot. The concrete organization of this group I'm not sure if you can discuss this at all unless we pin down ourselves as socialists,

Badis Badis: "That's what I'm saying—we have to have principles of unity."

Oscellatus: "You want those in an afternoon?"

Jarbua: "How about a year?"

Pongo Pongo: "Listen, some of us have been together for years … "

Puntius Stigma: "And our organization has been *laissez-faire*, and our ideology ludricrous. That doesn't mean coercion … "

Jarbua: "See, a lot of these issues are not clear: individualism vs. collective work. Most reform or revolution has taken a group political force, but most individuals involved were able to maintain an identity outside of that political force. I would like to see our group become more of a movement, which means we must allow the possibility of all sorts of people being involved which couldn't happen if we asked people to give up their individual pursuits for the group … "

Ramirezi: "I want to ask you a question: what would be the *political character* of that 'movement'?"

Jarbua: "See, I don't think there is, right now, the ideological basis for that movement. Part of the growing process involved will help sort out the ideological base. To me, what that critically turns on is *who* becomes involved and at what point. We certainly need more women involved, we need more blacks: I'd like to see some people with a background in 'economics. Other fields can contribute to this ideological struggle. We don't have the basis for a collective … "

Pongo Pongo: "Sounds exactly like the worst liberal tokenism … "

Metae: "You seem to have stated that you want your 'personal ideology' to be reflected in the group ideology … people are using 'ideology' in different ways. 'Working out' ideology? Do they mean of group, or cultural, or political? Now that's something we should sort out.

Jarbua: "Can I reply: I either want my personal ideology-given that 'ideology' is obscure here—to be reflected in this group in terms of the group ideology or, else, I want the freedom to contact other groups or individuals with whom I have more ideological solidarity.

I don't care which way it goes, but I can't stand to be in a situation where I'm in the ideological minority."

Bellica: **"You always have the chance to not join the group … "**

Jarbua: **"I would hate that to be the case, but it's possible it might be."**

Pongo Pongo: **"Can we get back to the fuckin organization!"**

Bellica: **"The reason I don't want various academics coming in is that I'm presupposing we're embedded in a certain way in which those people are not. We have certain superstructural problems that excludes, automatically, certain kinds of people … "**

Jarbua: **"Like the working class?"**

Bellica: **"No."**

Badis Badis: **"Well, are we bourgeois artists or some kind of social-political group? That's basic … "**

Ramirezi: **"We said earlier that we want to change the social projectivity toward the economic base … "**

Bellica: **"We must forget importing experts and figure out our principles of uni [-fucking-]ty. Importing people promiscuously will dilute everything again—the socialist process … "**

Pongo Pongo: **"*Shit!!!* I said we cannot keep talking about socialism in a theoretical sense and we must bring it to bear on the organization of this group. I have a way of talking about both. There were certain things brought up when we went around the table: no more individual shows, we are only going to show as Art & Language. Now, the question is *why, why, why* would we want to do that? This is "crucial." Those who suggested that please show *how* that is penetrated by socialist theory. The individual shows and temptations of opportunism has been the penetration of this group by capitalism, which has played fuckin havoc with this group. So we have to get out of this. Collectivize information. Remove privileged access. But start! *Why*, asking *why* is surely the link between ideology and practice and that's what the group *is*. Organization is the real link between ideology and practice."**

Bellica: **"What time is it? Anyone want to respond?"**

Oscellatus: **"I don't know how to say this in a non-cumbersome way, that is, it's difficult to teach oneself to talk in a new way. Perhaps some people, and I don't mean this as a charge, can function better in a bureaucracy, can have a sense of their own worth and potency within a context of bureaucracy … "**

[laughter]

Punkay: **"Is this your idea of a bureaucracy? No one mentioned bureaucracy … "**

Oscellatus: **"I am! I think when we have 14 people operating under the same name, then that could begin to function as a bureaucracy."**

[uproar]

Puntius Stigma: **"I don't think anybody should even respond. People working together being labelled a bureaucracy is silly …"**

[uproar]

Badis Badis: **"I don't agree with the charge of bureaucracy. But if 14 people work together we will have more power, and 35 more, and 3,000 more, and that's what we're sitting here for … "**

Oscellatus: **"I'm in agreement, but *can* we go from 14 people to more?"**

Badis Badis: **"How are we going to find out?"**

Puntius Stigma: **"You can't open it up unless you sort out here … *unity* … and that's being avoided. But I wanted to answer something brought up before: why would we utilize a collective label rather than individual names? What are the ideological implications? I think that's rather important. For me, this changes my relationship to what I do. It transforms a blatant commodity relation into something, transitionally, into a *tentative* commodity relationship and that seems a very important step in the right direction. And it is a strong ideological point, nothing whatsoever to do with psychology."**

Punkay: **"I agree: I wanted to say something about how we expand. If we bring in other people without sorting out our relation to the artworld, then it's just going to be pure havoc. We will wind up right where we started from, as a *laissez-faire* group of artists which *nevertheless* form a coalition for some sort of political ends which *nevertheless* does not inform our practice as fucking artists! It's**

weird! What you said, and you said you tried not to be cumbersome, but you were just projecting this incredibly pioneering attitude as to how one operates in the world."

Oscellatus: "Can you explain that?"

Punkay: "Yeah. I don't think the question is to worry about your potency as an individual if you are confronted with a collectivity of other people. I think that's completely deformed. It's like that well known argument that you work with others only because you can't 'make it' on your own. I see either charges of bureaucracy or falling back on individualism to be a response to that framework you have so eloquently defended in both theory and practice. True it will be difficult to implement decisions, but administration *does not* imply bureaucracy … "

Oscellatus: "Well, it seems that the dangers must be aired; just because this system sucks we can't assume … "

Bellica: "This is off the point. Okay, do you have something to say about collectivity?"

Jarbua: "Since I've been working on *The Fox*, that's the first time I've had contact with collectives. The *Mayday* collective works as such, but individual names appear and different opinions exist. *Redstockings* is a radical feminist collective, *Seven Days* is a collective of 3 men and 3 women who also operate outside of the collective and so on. Having a collective doesn't mean necessarily individual differentiation cannot be identified … "

Bellica: "But you're the only one who has been arguing that they can't."

Ramirezi: "To identify where we are and why I think this kind of collective action, based on a different kind of social projectivity is essential to us: I think that if we remain in a superstructural relationship to everything, if we view ourselves as a collective base functioning in the superstructure and our existence in the superstructure constitutes a social base for action rather than having that projectivity toward the economic base then we are going to define culture in the same way that culture has been defined, from above. Culture and creativity belong to people, all people. Those perogatives are embedded in people's history and for us to be sorting out definitions is capitalist taxonomy. *Again*, and *again* we introduce those same relations."

PART 3

At the start of the seventh "struggle session", the following provisos or points of unity were introduced. These were said to be based on the discussions of the previous day.

1) All work which is "made public" will be represented under the collective name. This applies to exhibitions, published articles, teaching, and any other working which has a "public" form.

2) All work which is "made public" has to be struggled over and accepted by the general body. This will set up a framework for self-criticism/criticism of work (something rather lacking just recently). In this matter, the will of the general body has to prevail.

3) Working "publically" in an individualistic manner will be considered as self-disqualification from this process.

4) What are the implications of this for the economics of each of us?

5) What do we do about the question of expansion and the prospects of working with other people (this was subsequently changed to: our strength is based in our ideological struggle. New participation in the group is likely to emerge through development of working relations with existing participants.

6) Do we retain the name Art & Language?

The following questions. were also intro-

duced: i) What about 'decentralised' (from New York'City) working? ii) What is 'the definition' of collective work and iii) Can we work toward 'thematic' exhibitions?

The following proviso was also introduced later: it concerns history: the transformation of *history*. The 'early work' of *all* participants, formalist sculpture, painting, idea art, word art, theoretical art, music-art—all informs our going on (that is, it's *all* as useful and *all* as useless).

Pongo Pongo: I think those who are in general agreement with the above provisos should form a splinter group to be called (Provisional) Art & Language.

Oscellatus: Like the Provisional IRA you mean?

Ramirezi: No, like (provisional) Art & Language.

Pongo Pongo: Those not in agreement with the provisos can retain the name Art & Language. The issue must be made clear: we are not trying to push anybody 'out', we are simply trying to go on. In other words, those who want to stay in the position we're in now, can retain the name Art & Language, those who want to go on must go on with a different name and with a new form of organization.

Ramirezi: I would add one thing. I understand that in addition to these provisos we unite around socialism … an historic understanding thereof."

Oscellatus: "The problem isn't based on the terms of socialism, it's based on the terms of this program.

Clarius: "This program"

Oscellatus: "*That's* the problem, it's *not* ideological. "

Clarius: "It's not ideological."

Oscellatus: "This program, that's a problem for some people … "

Clarius: "Because I don't look upon this as being ideological … "

Puntius Stigma: "if it's a form of organization it does in part define ideology for us."

Bellica: "It makes certain 'assumptions' about socialism."

[uproar]

Oscellatus: "Allan Wallach's letter to Puntius Stigma brings up certain points that are relevant. There are a couple of points I made myself in the thing I read yesterday. One of the things that seems really to address itself to our problem is about whether one believes it possible to create revolution in miniature amongst us. What I object to … if I think it's a good-faith thing then I'm willing to give up a lot and I'm willing to work. I feel I've been doing that in the last several months and I feel it's sometimes lost. It feels as though things are gobbled up and taken for granted. It's very hard for me to maintain my trust with the group when I get very little positive feedback. I think we have to recognize certain things that come up when people operate as leaders. I think *The Fox* was a good idea—some people worked hard against it. It has been most instrumental putting us where we are now … right? Now since *The Fox* a lot of new people have come into A&L and they've all come in from one side of the leadership. So a vote here is really stacked against me. I don't feel I can work with many of you as individuals but I feel that—like in the Patty Hearst trial—the term came up … It was called persuasive coercion and so I feel a little nervous about how much of a 'good faith' atmosphere we're working in. This set of provisos here seems sort of Gerrymandered in a way to isolate my power base, my usefulness to the group. It doesn't affect people's grants, it doesn't affect the other kinds of economic bases of other people's lives. This way I take the blunt of it. I'm quite willing to do that but I think that 5 and 6 make the acceptability of this very contingent at this point. In other words, if I give up everything I don't want to find myself in a situation where I'm working for Puntius Stigma. Now I have to find out we're all going to be working together and the power is going to be *distributed* … that's why for me, at this point, it's an open question … I haven't made up my mind one way or another. I'm really waiting to see what transpires."

Pongo Pongo: "I have certain alliances with Oscellatus in many ways. When you say people have come in on one side of the power base you mean on Puntius Stigma's side? It's a bit insulting Oscellatus to say that Punkay, Bellica, Jaculator and Hypostomus are 'work-

ing' for Puntius Stigma because I know they are not. The reason people have 'come in' on that side is that Puntius has been talking to a lot of other people … "

Oscellatus: "You can't say I haven't been, if that's what you're implying."

Pongo Pongo: "Well, you've never seen the social base of working."

Oscellatus: "There was a fight over *The Fox*, and unfortunately it's been put in terms of a fight between Puntius and I and it looked like I won in some way. At that there seemed to be a real recruitment strategy on the inside. Not that it's a sort of self-conscious Machiavellian plot but, nonetheless, I think Metae's involvement—and I've been really interested in what Metae's had to say—but he does support Puntius every time. Multifasciata has been very supportive of Puntius in that way … he came in through Puntius too; and Badis Badis seems to be somehow much more independent but somehow I think there's something going on between the two of you and Ramirezi and Albifrons. Albifrons coming in very late in the game so that what happened in these meetings … I feel there's a certain kind of social dynamic going on here and I have a hard time getting a fair hearing. Bellica, Punkay, Jaculator and Hypostomus are somewhat more neutral territory. It's been very useful to eliminate psychology from the conversations but Punkay has certain problems with Pongo Pongo and sometimes with Puntius and sometimes with me. I think this has been put expressedly in ideological terms without us looking at the psychology so I don't think Punkay has had much choice but to support the general thrust of what's going on here."

Multifasciata: "One historical point: I've known Pongo Pongo as long as I've know Puntius. One thing I've brought up in earlier meetings is that we all have different histories and I wanted to stress the point that our reason for being interested in this group is based on our own, repeat *our own* historical experience, not on the desire to join a club. I know Metae's history, I know Badis Badis' and mine, but I don't know Ramirezi's. We, in our own work, reached a point where we began to ask similar questions to those Pongo Pongo and Puntius Stigma were asking. Because we knew them personally we started talking with them. But the important point is that we asked questions *historically*, based on our old work. We didn't just adopt 'a new style' nor were we pursued to join the group on the side of Puntius Stigma, You said we were all following behind Puntius like sheep, but I know that Badis Badis, Metae and I came to these so-called struggle sessions believing in an organization with points of unity like the ones we are now struggling over … though we may not have articulated them as well as Puntius Stigma … but about articulateness … We had a hard time 'busting' into A&L dialogue. But I think it's strange that the people who have the least interest in maintaining the A&L label want to keep it and those who have the most interest don't mind dropping it. By maintaining the label it allows us a kind of 'checklist'. By keeping the label we're keeping an eye on whether people are going along with those principles. I think the problem, for the split in a sense, and this has partly to do with our history too, is that a lot of us have made a clear cut break in our history, at least with the products of that history, whereas you, Oscellatus, want to keep a linear continuity."

Clarius:"I think Oscellatus said he was willing to give that up."

Oscellatus: "I have, I'm using my work as a negative example."

Multifasciata: "But your article in the last Fox tried to develop a linear history. "

Oscellatus: "I'm not alone to be attacked on this, right?"

Multifasciata: "Okay, the real issue is whether you use Socialism as a kind of form to make art, or whether you become involved and informed by the real socialist process."

Oscellatus: "I agree … "

Multifasciata: "Well, these provisos are starting to involve us in the socialist process rather than treating socialism as 'the next form'.

Oscellatus: "See, I've been trying to make changes. But I feel that a lot of the old battles are being dragged into this and rephrased in terms of 'correct terminology'."

Bellica: "I've had my ups and downs with you. Recently I've felt more open to you; one of the reasons you may have felt isolated

and felt as if people were being recruited on the so-called 'side of Puntius' for example … well, many people perceived your articles in *The Fox* as being different from all the others. Now I'm saying this according to what others have told me. People thought they were different because of their content, not on the basis of knowing you. These people did not have any great vested interest in supporting me and they brought it up, saying that your articles were the most self-promotional, consequently they felt as if you were making fewer changes. So, in a sense, they were more interested in a more overtly different political direction and so they were more interested in other articles. So they might not come to you on that basis."

Oscellatus: "I take that. But, see, there is a certain element of patience that we have to have. First off, those were written last Summer. I've moved a long way from that."

Bellica: "But those articles are *there*."

Clarius: "Can we end this discussion?"

Badis Badis: "By you defending yourself your defense is in the way of bringing up old chestnuts or old issues or old battles. But we're here now and we're starting now and you cannot change this group. If we, all fourteen of us, came 'in' through Puntius it's irrelevant because we're all here now and we're all talking about one point: how do we go on? If you feel paranoid about how everyone got 'in' then from that position I don't know how you can answer the question: how do we go on? I don't agree with you and most of us have expressed that we do not agree with that viewpoint, but we're here now and we're going to go on."

Oscellatus: "See, the thing is that my response to that is that I think that one of the reasons we do need new people in here is that they do not have a vested interest in any of the on-going A&L power plays and I think a lot of people wouldn't tolerate a lot of the nonsense that goes on in here. We're all numbed into being used to the things that go-on between Puntius Stigma and myself, right? That's one of the reasons I think we need some fresh blood. People who will take the arguments on their own merits. I don't feel Ramirezi and Albifrons would accept *whatever* I said, frankly, or Puntius Stigma. Those are problems, they have nothing to do with content, they have to do with a history. This makes it almost impossible for people to overcome; it's going to take a long time is all I'm saying; but we're not giving us a long time … we want to get these problems nailed down before Puntius goes off to San Diego. That's why there's something very unreal … there's been a kind of theater going on here for several days; I don't know if it's connected to the real world. "

Pongo Pongo: "This is getting off the point. Oscellatus, you are trying to make it sound as if the rest of us are here just because we are members of Puntius Stigma's Fan Club. Actually, you know yourself that there has been a great deal of hostility toward Puntius from a lot of people and quite often from me. There's disagreements, but the disagreements we all have with Puntius and each other are different than the disagreements we have with you and you must know that your exhibiting policy and your art-world presence has been a continual problem which A&L has never been able to really sort out. You've never been able to sort it out either."

Oscellatus: "It's no different from the behaviour of everyone else … "

Pongo Pongo: "It seems to me there's a considerable difference … "

Oscellatus: "In *quantity* not quality."

Pongo Pongo: "Well, no: you have always had, and we have always allowed you to have, a certain say as to what goes on in A&L but we've never had a say in what goes on in your work because as 'an individual' you have this pioneering attitude. Now let's be realistic, we have to have some organizational control over the way this group gets mined, the way people go into it and out of it and stop the opportunism. Now you are either going to be completely separate from A&L or completely in it and that's all that we're asking around this table. Not half and half. I'm just reading *The People's History of England* and you remind me of Charles II and you're like the King around here and we're like the nobles and your defense keeps coming down to the fact that we can't attack you for no other reason than because you have to maintain your position as King."

Oscellatus: "I think that's virtually mean) ingless.

Pongo Pongo: "Well, I'm saying that there are certain commitments this group has to going on and to a certain degree you are holding them up because you are saying that you have these problems, that you have this and you have that, that you have various commit ments to the art-world. I don't know what I'd do in the same circumstances but you have to understand that we have to sort this out. That is, we have no choice. "

Oscellatus: "Art & Language in England had a retrospective in Oxford and I think part of the reason Art & Language in England might have retrospectives and others may have retrospectives has to do with a certain kind of historical embeddedness. Now I can see why that would be a problem but at the same time there hasn't been a policy … in other words, there has been self-interest, you know, within the group and it's been going on for a long time and it seems to me like I said a couple of days ago, if we genuinely want to start from the beginning and everyone sacrifices for it, that's one thing. But if something like this is drawn up (the provisos draft) as a way of finishing off 'old battles' that's been going on for years. I think it has nothing to do with Socialism whatever, and I think we should consider that fact."

Pongo Pongo: "Oscellatus, what do you think that 'old battle' comes down to? What is the *cause* of the 'old battle'? Is the cause of the 'old battle' career conflicts or is the cause, from the very beginning, an ideological conflict? "

Oscellatus: "I know damn well it hasn't been an ideological conflict. I think that what happened is that in some regards … and this certainly doesn't apply to everybody, because I don't know how far back you're going … there's been an aspect of unrequited art-world love that has fueled this."

Clarius: "Let's stop this too … "

Jarbua: "At the risk of changing the subject and putting myself in the hot seat: I have supported A&L against Oscellatus' individual careerism for a long time both within A&L and my private conversations with Oscellatus. I think he hasn't been giving things up fast enough all along and that's why he's got himself in the incredible predicament he's in now. But, you know, part of my hesitation with going along with a program like this one is because I have felt, since I have been in A&L, in a minority of sorts ever since day one. When I wrote certain articles which were very important to me, those articles were universally criticised in A&L to the point where they probalbly would not have been published at all unless we had already set up a situation in which all the work that we did was going to be published. Through those articles I've received letters from a number of people who think the ideas that I had to express were very important and even though they were contrary in certain ways to other things that A&L stood for. That's my reason for not wanting to give up my right to express myself as an individual … and to be censored by the group because I just feel that I have things to say which are not acceptable to the group at this time. Were the group composed differently, I would certainly be willing to go along with that, but at this point, you know, that's my problem."

Jaculator: "I wanted to respond a long way back to something you said Oscellatus. You said arguments needed to be responded to on their own merits and that means it's a justification for needing 'new blood'. People who are not so much embedded in order to get this 'other point of view' which you didn't think was coming across here because you feel under constant attack. Well, not everybody's history is *within* this group but those problems have to be worked out first and foremost *within* this group. The historical embeddedness is like a dead-weight. The points of unity must be worked out here, first, In terms of what you said Jarbua, your articles were criticised within this group but I thought one of the things was to use this group as a viable social base rather than locating ourselves and judging ourselves according to art-world prescribed individualistic prescription of what an artist does in society. That should be first and foremost where that stuff comes from and that's the most important criticism in terms of it. When somebody outside reads an article (etc.) they don't have the same relations sorted out that all the people here have & the criticism from here is

what we are trying to establish as valid."

Jarbua: **"I understand that, but I think criticism from outside has validity in relation to what the group says … "**

Pongo Pongo: **"Jarbua, you can't have it both ways … If the group doesn't like it at all and people outside in the art-world or wherever like it, doesn't that tell you anything?"**

Jarbua: **"I don't mean people outside 'in general', I mean particular people who's ideas I respect."**

Jaculator: **"Well I didn't have any kind of involvement in this group at that time but I was interested in what was going on and I was fairly critical of your work myself for reasons not set out to jump on you or hurt you. "**

Jarbua: **"Likewise I've been critical of all sorts of articles that people have written. Now how does that come into play?"**

Ramirezi: **"The way I came, the way I came to these meetings is like … I leave half of myself sort of projecting in some directions … they really pull you apart in some funny ways. Oscellatus said that he doesn't think anything he says could be taken seriously by Albifrons or myself. I try to take seriously everything he says. My criticism of it doesn't mean I don't take it seriously. My lack of agreement doesn't mean I don't take it seriously because I've already said several times during these sessions that I thought you could find conflict as a norm of conversation. I've had, over the past few years, growing recognition of my class relations. Most often the ideological conflicts I have reproduce the awareness of those kind of negative class relations … and that is my situation with Jarbua and Oscellatus; particularly in these meetings. We've seen at the beginning of the meetings how you came talking about being able to hold on to certain 'bourgeois values' and then, you did some 'rapid changes.' I'm willing to accept those changes on 'good faith'. I'm perfectly willing to accept that kind of progress and as I said last night, I sympathise with the amount of sacrifice that's going to have to go on if you are in fact going to continue to participate in A&L—if we are in fact going in the direction we have been talking about. I'm just trying to get at what the ideological conflicts amount to. You said, you do not think we have ideological conflicts … [stumbling] … you say your work functions as a 'negative example' … I question that. It functions as a negative example *to whom* and *for whom*? It functions in the art-world, in a certain way. It seems to me to reproduce the spurious 'rationality' of knowledge. It perpetuates a privilege, a certain set of privileged knowledge relations about who is making the definitions of what culture *is* [sic] … of *what* those kinds of relations are, and it seems to be completely counter to the kinds of social projectivity that this piece of paper (the provisos) is talking about establishing. In the past there were all kinds of structural prescriptions against us making prescriptions against each others' actions. But we have to reach a plateau before we can talk about those things in any 'clear' and 'logical' way. What is the basis of our social relations? We have to begin to stop talking about them in terms of allegiance to Puntius because I might vote the same. I came into this group with A&L UK."**

Jarbua: **"So did I."**

Ramirezi: **"I came to New York and I have social relations with some people here on an on-going basis. I maintain my ties to England but they are basically of a different kind. I took Oscellatus' point about working here in New York. In terms of finding out what our functional locale is … it's a locale of conflict and I think that the presence of academic forms are symptomatic of a certain kind of footdragging … "**

Jarbua: **"I agree with you but …**

Ramirezi: **"But if I write an article and I get a letter and somebody says 'boy, I took a lot of your points', I'm not going to embed that as any index of the value of my discourse till I know where they are coming from in terms of class analysis. That's an absolute requirement. We function along certain kinds of historical and 'thematic' lines; we try to keep operative two different kinds of relationships: one being historic-artistic relationships of A&L to the art-world and us to A&L which everyone's so sick of, and on the other hand, projectivity toward the working class, an acceptance, you may want to call it a blind acceptance on my part, of the fact that the working class *transforms* society. Our job is to try and**

figure out what we can do; Amen."

Oscellatus: "I think that people have a desire to have a dialogue with people outside of the group and I think that as Pongo Pongo has pointed out, it's very difficult to have dialogue with a committee."

Ramirezi: "If you're directing that at me … I think that's a misunderstanding of an individual's possible function in a collective. That's why we're talking about it here. You see, you think it's open to debate, what a collective is, like we want to form some sort of idealized 'collective.' Both of you frame your statements in terms of 'what kind of society we want to see."

Pongo Pongo: "I'm a bit puzzled … I mean, I mean, I don't want to pick on Jarbua's example of 'getting letters from the world outside', but I got several letters concerning an article I had written letting me know that this article was universally hated and I considered that to be an index of its success and that success has got to do with the fact that this group gave me the class strength to articulate what I did, to put forward those kinds of commitments depended on my social base *here* in this group. I relied on people in this group, say like Ramirezi and Puntius and Punkay to say 'you did the right thing and you can't expect the bourgeoisie to like what you do' and that's what this group is all about really, But you're saying it's the people *outside* who are telling you that you're doing the right thing. Now there's gotta be something *that* suggests … "

Jarbua: "I think it suggests something too and I'd like to respond to that because I think it's at the basis of my ideological disagreement with people in the group. To me, in order to avoid a process toward socialism which is coercive, authoritarian, aggressive, I see the process as necessarily being one which is affirmative, co-operative, positive and for that reason I think that what our strategy should be, and I've thought this all along, is to offer something to people that draws them in rather than cuts them off, as basic as that. I'm interested in getting people interested in what we're doing not in alienating people and putting them off and making them take reactionary stands against what we're doing."

Pongo Pongo: "I think she's making a methodological point about different ways of going on and perhaps there's room in this group for those people who want to try and persuade and seduce. But sometimes it's much better to alienate people. I see it as almost … as logically impossible to avoid alienating the bourgeoisie. It depends who you are talking to. You can't sweet talk Rockefeller."

Jarbua: "Who's talking about Rockefeller?"

Pongo Pongo: "Okay, he's a bad example. But the negative reaction you got to your articles, what do you think about them, were they justified?"

Jarbua: "Within the group?"

Pongo Pongo: "Yeah."

Jarbua: "Sure, a lot of them were justified."

Pongo Pongo: "I think the point is, did you *learn more* from the criticism within the group?"

Jarbua: "A lot of the support I got came from Art & Language in England."

Ramirezi: "Do you think they uniformly supported those articles?"

Jarbua: "No, they were highly critical"

Ramirezi: "What support are you talking about then?"

Jarbua: "When I say things like this it just gets everybody on my back. But after the first *Fox* they thought, Michael said, that my article was one of the most level-headed articles in *The Fox*."

Ramirezi: "We're just going to have to drop A&L UK as an index of fucking authenticity for this group because I agree with you Pongo Pongo, finally, it fucks everything up. Because they tell me something totally different about what you wrote."

Jarbua: "I think it should be dropped too, it's not as if I'm going out to a bunch of bourgeois artists and saying 'come on',— it isn't all that bad'. That's not what I'm talking about."

Ramirezi: "I know, but A&L UK is supportive of everybody in the same way you're talking about. "

Pongo Pongo: "Can I make a suggestion? I think that these points of unity (whatever) are something that should, with devotion, be

worked towards. This may give people a certain amount of leeway but I would also say that if we adopt something like this we are going to work towards it and people who indulge in activities which are detrimental to progress be reprimanded and this be brought up before the entire group. That may sound something like the council of the soviets but this isn't a liberal group anymore. I would like, as a procedural point to go through these points and vote on them and discuss the questions and those who abstain give reasons for abstention."

Metae: "I think the problem talking about (Provisional) Art & Language and 'old' Art & Language is that it reifies sub-groups and that's a risky procedure. I just see kind of 'nyaah, you're old', 'you're new', 'old' is better than 'new'. I just don't think it's a matter of splitting it all up like that."

Pongo Pongo: "What is it a matter of?"

Metae: "Then I think it's just a problem of the way you phrased it as 'provisional' and 'remaining'. Can you phrase it better?"

Pongo Pongo: "All right, if you consider that we are now along a line. Now you were one of the people against changing the name?"

Metae: "Right."

Pongo Pongo: "All right, so those who don't wish to go on according to these points of unity no longer belong to Art & Language. In other words, that's a real hard line isn't it."

Oscellatus: "Can I make a quick quip here?"

Pongo Pongo: "Quip?"

Oscellatus: "A lot of us collect fish here: the way you mix the water, you don't just dump the fish in. That's basic. It's a sort of human attempt to get our heads together in some way to make the transition, and it's the first human act I've witnessed all week, and so I appreciate the gesture."

Metae: "I withdraw my objection."

Jarbua: "However I vote on this, I'm not sure at all how the vote is set up, however I vote on it is going to depend crucially on this point (5)."

Oscellatus: " … crucial. .. "

Jarbua:"That's absolutely crucial to me as well as how that defines our freedom to work with other groups."

Multifasciata: "Can I suggest a time limit or we're not going to make it all the way through today and we've got to resolve this."

[break]

Jarbua: [aside] "Clarius, I feel like every time I say something, it's like throwing it to a bunch of piranhas."

Pongo Pongo: "I have to go. I'll be back. I'll hear the tape. I agree with everything. I'll be right back … "

Jarbua: "I have not yet worked with any other groups in a productive way other than A&L although I can see the possibility of being very interested in doing that in the future. Two other problems I have with the first point are that, like Metae said, … there's socialism and there's socialism and certainly a radical feminist would make claims to being socialist as would anarchists and both of those movements are ones which I find extremely problematical but also extremely interesting and so I don't see how we have the ideological solidarity at this point really for any one of us to speak and represent the group. I have problems with certain people who go to the Cultural United Front representing Art & Language because they don't represent my point of view in that situation. I also like to speak at the Artist's Meeting for Cultural Change and try things which don't represent A&L as well. So I have problems like that too as far as the teaching goes, since the teaching I've done at this point has been in New York, but lots of people here will be teaching in positions all over the world and so they won't be in a position to be scrutinized and censored by the group. I literally cannot speak for *all* right now nor do I feel that other people here speak for me, until we have the ideological solidarity. So that's my biggest problem with Number 1. One other problem is that I'm a little confused about what I think of the value of that kind of anonymous … you know, like the way we come off like a pack … like at John Weber's and I sometimes wonder whether our ability to infiltrate all sorts of different situations, such as Artist's Meeting for Cultural Change and the Cultural United Front … because of our concern for those groups."

Clarius: "I have no conflicts. I have only one thing that might come up: doing work with people in the State under a CAPS grant. I

would have no objection with working with this under that … we are trying to unify but we all seem to be operating under different ideologies now. I can accept the first point. Okay, who has something to say? No, let's start with number 2 then."

Punkay: "I support point 2. It's one of the things I always thought was lacking recently. Of course, you can't accept point 2 without accepting point 1."

Badis Badis: "I accept point 2. I found myself frustrated with our last show since I didn't know what other people thought about it. I find a problem though as far as the word criticism goes. It would not be along formal lines; it would only be along socialist lines, which means that work must further 'the cause', be it film or talking or writing. Socialism would be the area of criticism to me that could really bear down upon specific works, not formal problems."

Ramirezi: "Insofar as I think 'art' is the prerogative of another class, that class being the working class … 'people' … in order to avoid buzz words, and insofar as art and artists have been a function of a certain sort of privileged relationship to knowledge in the definitions and determinations therein, this point right here is our basis for attacking those kinds of notions and attacking them in a clear cut sort of way. I don't think it means we are determining the 'absolute character of work that people do'. Everybody does different work. What we are talking about is, as Puntius mentioned earlier … an old chestnut … Marx saying 'from each according to ability to each according to need'. This is our place from where we can destroy the art-ificial division of political form from social content. And this is the place where we can actually get some real distribution of function. By real I mean one that works for us. This is where we can implement number 1."

Albifrons: "I think that point 2 is a good point. It will certainly strengthen the work that goes out and eliminate anything that would confuse the issue. We have to be unified around the idea of socialism and the work will certainly be strengthened by everyone together struggling over it. So I support it,"

Oscellatus: "I think that 1 and 2 are in a certain way inseparable, It's kind of interesting to think of 1 without 2, One aspect of my agreeing to 2 would be: I would have to insist that everyone does work. That some people don't work and just participate in the criticism knocking down other people's work which I can see happening because several people don't do work and I think they would have to put their asses on the line a bit too. That's one thing that I can see has to be brought up …"

[uproar]

Hypostomous: "What does he mean 'some people don't do work'? I agree with the second point … I'd love to see the second point actually …"

Puntius Stigma: "So would I. There's one thing that isn't appreciated here and that is 'work which is made public must be accepted by the general body'. Whether it has to be unanimous, a majority, whether we sort of simply struggle with it until there's some sort of agreement, I don't know. But in general and to refer to what Badis Badis was saying, we obviously can't have a heirarchy of forms of work, we have to analyze each form for what it's worth. And there are lots of forms of work, some of which are barely recognizable as such…"

Metae: "What Oscellatus said is sort of a premature problem. His definition of 'work', … definitions of 'work' are put by people who already 'work',"

Oseellatus: "The word 'work' exists here in this paragraph … "

Metae: "Right. Are you trying to further define it?"

Oscellatus: "It seems to assume what work is and I was just discussing what that assumption might be .. ,"

Multifasciata: "I agree with point 2."

Jaculator: "What Puntius said, he said that when work is brought into the group, should it be a majority or should it be unanimous or should everybody struggle until a point is reached, and this latter seems a very crucial point about collective work,"

Jarbua: "Well, I also see 1 and 2 as inseparable. For me, a large part of what I see my work having been about has to do with just having plain conversations with people and I don't see how my conversations with people

could be subject to group censorship. I just don't understand how that works?"

Punkay: "Focus on the phrase 'made public'."

Bellica: "Right. We're talking about what kinds of 'institutionalized' projects, not your day to day conversations."

Jarbua: "Well I could see writing an article for a feminist magazine, which wouldn't pass in this group."

Badis Badis: "Why?"

Bellica: "Why not?"

Jarbua: "I mean it might not."

Jaculator: "Unless it was completely against everything this group stands for in terms of representational … "

Jarbua: "You know, and also, that fear I have of the 'thought police' when it says 'the will of the general body will prevail'—yaaaahh!"

Ramirezi: "Can I ask you a question? Do you think that doesn't exist in the world already?"

Jarbua: "Sure it exists but I would trust it more to come out of … "

Puntius Stigma: "Can I suggest, just as a procedural point obviously that we should and we must be able to work toward forms of working in which *everyone* can participate."

Oscellatus: "Okay, good."

Clarius: "Let's get on with the points."

Punkay: "I would say there is a confusion between individual and individualism and once again remember all these points to be methodological suggestions directed primarily at our market presence and I support it in that respect. I don't see how any of us here can avoid ourselves as individuals but that's not what we're talking about … "

[snickering]

Ramirezi: "Why don't we rephrase that 'individuals, working publicly, will be considered as self-disqualification from this process?'"

Hypostomous: "Also individuals in a subgroup … "

Metae: "It is individualism we are talking about … "

Bellica: "I would rather have it 'working in an individualist manner. , .', so that it would include the sub-groups."

Ramirezi: "Capitalism will not be tolerated."

Punkay: "It's unfortunate we have to focus on the market all the time."

Ramirezi: "I don't think that's a problem. We *have* to, it's going to clarify our external relations."

Bellica: "Right. If you accept this as a socialist strategy, then working as an individualist means that you will exploit the invitations, projects available to A&L as an individual. That is, you will be exploiting *this group*."

Ramirezi: "That also cuts off that whole thing about having some looneys in the back room called A&L who act as an individual's radical index."

Jaculator: "Right."

Puntius Stigma: "Take this conversation and flog it … "

[mild outbreaks of disorder ensue]

Jarbua: ''I'm continuing the point. I've been recognized by the chair. This whole package deal, to me, is dependent upon the ideological development of this group and whether that comes about through expansion, discussion, study groups, however that happens, my acceptance of the whole deal is dependent on the ideological development of the group."

Clarius: "I had something to say: I accept the point. I can't remember what I wanted to say so let's continue on point 4."

Jarbua: "But wait a minute, the problem with that is like, Jaculator criticised me before for funneling everything through A&L, didn't you?"

Ramirezi: "And I criticised you for the opposite … "

Jaculator: "Just in terms of specific history, just in terms of feminism. "

Jarbua: "Yeah, I can't … my loyalty is to my beliefs, so, whether.I use my experience in my women's group to bring to bear on this group or whether I bringmy experience from this group to bear on that group, I mean that's always going to go on both ways."

Punkay: "Yeah, you have that problem, in a certain sense, because you chose to deal with feminism in terms of this group which got you into that situation, It's funny, I'm not saying it's funny, it's odd."

Jaculator: "It's not a negative criticism."

Punkay: "No, it's just what happened. It's why Jaculator could think of Jarbua in

one way in terms of feminism. You are going to feminist groups and you are talking about, basically, your relationship with an all male group which is A&L rather than how A&L is a group confused with a feminist group, you are always caught in the double bind."

Jaculator: "I agree but I think that situation very basically can, in Jarbua's case, not reverse itself, but change."

Jarbua: "But that also has to do with AMCC, CUF. I've seen more and more potential in AMCC specifically after last weekend and the meeting that was conducted by the women which I thought was very powerful … "

Oscellatus: lilt was amazing how different it was … "

Clarius: "Okay, let's get on to point 5."

Badis Badis: "I have a problem. It has to do with the question of expansion. I don't think it's possible to expand until we can find out what we are in order for other people to become 'part'. I think we are in the process of reform and I therefore cannot see the possibility of expansion until we can show a clear choice to people."

Ramirezi: "Can I add one point? I agree and would just like to say that it plays into a different kind of political manoeuvering: 'adding new people'."

Oscellatus: "I think this is a crucial issue. It is for Jarbua and me. I think again, as to what our ideology is … Because I think we do need an influx of new people, new information and that doesn't mean we bring in 30 people which add to the existant 14. It has to be reasonable in some way. They have to be people we can all feel we can work with as opposed to the bizarre way this 14 ended up coming together. So I'm not simply searching for a strategy to even up the voting amongst us, anything like that, but it is about bringing in enough people into the group that one could feel comfortable in terms of working with other people. And we could broaden our base in the art world. We can expand, with the exception of those notable exceptions—a big group of us come out of a conceptual art background."

Jarbua: "Well, we all come out of a bourgeois art background."

Puntius Stigma: "I myself would like to develop a situation where such a thing as voting never comes up, that we can deal with things in a more … "

Oscellatus: "dialectical way?"

Puntius Stigma: " … real relationships, not—sort of—'a majority'. Yes, we need other people to come in, sort of to shake us off our asses in some way. But at the same time, obviously, our strength must lie in our ideology, not in our numbers. People have to come in on' this basis. We don't do something like simply elect new participants. It has always been that people were around and they started talking and working and participating became the criteria for being part of it, you don't have a membership card."

Oscellatus: "That sounds pretty simple …"

Jarbua: "I think it sounds pretty simple too … "

Oscellatus: "I think that one thing that brings up too is that we might have A&L as a general banner and there would be many collectives and this would be one."

[Pongo Pongo returns]

Metae: "Expansion must be informed by our ideological development and I don't think it's necessarily a matter of enlarging our base in the art-world because, as Puntius says, our strength comes from ideology rather from the size of our base. If we have ourselves sorted ideologically, we can invite people to these things but we have to reach a certain level of sorting before we can … "

Oscellatus : "I'm not sure that's …"

Metae: "… Say, come along, come and join, we work in a spectrum of … "

Ramirezi: "Opinion …"

Bellica: "We haven't normally been in a position of 'inviting' people anyway … "

Badis Badis: "But it's closed at this point until we go-on …"

Jarbua: "I'm getting so confused about what is the hard core at what people are getting at. When Metae said our strength comes from our ideology rather than our … our … what?"

Ramirezi: "Numbers."

Jarbua: "Numbers? I think that's another chicken and egg thing. I think the strength of our ideology could be directly affected by our numbers and I think that A&L in the past has

never had an ideological cohesion and part of the strength of A&L has been the fact of the number of people that were contributing to the ideological struggles within A&L. So, when Ramirezi said that thing about 'the most radical thing about A&L had been the social relations…'"

Ramirezi: "I meant that to be slightly facetious. Also, please try and see it as a subtle issue."

Metae: "Can I respond directly to Jarbua: we have a problem with ideology. You see A&L representing a 'combination' of personal ideologies and I don't see A&L representing that. I see A&L representing a common ideology which is informed by socialist ideology. You know, you continually stress that you have a sense of dilemma until the group ideology includes the representation of your ideology and that seems to me to be a real block with the way I talk and what I say and you understand. "

Jarbua: "That's because there's socialist ideology and there's socialist ideology. I don't think you can say socialist ideology and be so clear about what you mean by socialist ideology. "

Ramirezi: "Can I say one thing though? What you are characterising as a chicken and egg philosophical problem is also a valuing of one as nature. That it is a false philosophical problem is in fact proved *by* dialectics. [Oscel latus makes incredulous noises.] The participation requirements for admittance: we have a lot of ways that people are coming to talk, that we're talking about people coming into this group. We're organizing."

Jarbua: "I also think a certain amount of flexibility—I think Oscellatus' idea about having meetings that people can come and see what's going on and what we represent and what we represent would be real useful to us and other people …"

Ramirezi: "I agree so long as Daniel Bell doesn't show up."

[snickering] .

Jarbua: "I don't want Daniel Bell any more than you do … "

Metae: "I'd like to know what 'we represent'?"

Badis Badis: "Yeah … "

Clarius: "We'll turn this over for discussion. No people would enter this group unless they had a strong relationship to the points put here [draft-provisos]. I think a person would naturally come in with an openness and could be acquainted with these when they would come in. But I think-that's a healthy thing … "

Jarbua: "But you came in exclusively on your relationship to me … "

Ramirezi: "That's not entirely true. Clarius and I had a lot of conversations that … "

Jarbua: "Yeah, and you were ready to cut Clarius from the conversations and that's the whole reason I brought Clarius in."

Ramirezi: "That' not true … "

Punkay: "I've had conversations with Clarius … "

Jaculator: "I'm close to CIarius … "

Jarbua: "I have it on tape, Ramirezi!"

Ramirezi: "Yes, which you still misunderstand as well."

Clarius: "You were playing a role in my being here as well as myself being ready to deal with the situation. I know there's a problem in expanding the group, but we should trust the people who will be involved in it. The point is I'm open to it."

Ramirezi: "So am I. I want to say that we can't keep having conflicts over that tape …"

Bellica: "Ramirezi, don't answer *everything* like that."

Ramirezi: "I know."

Puntius Stigma: "On the basis of what went on today this is a formulation of the point-it might come out something like: our strength is based in our ideological struggle, not in numbers. New participation in 'the group' for the time being is likely to emerge through the development of working relations with the existing participants."

Jarbua: "That's what *some* people said, some *others* said it exactly the other way around."

Puntius Stigma: "Sorry, I don't understand any conflict with what was said."

Jarbua: "Oscellatus, Clarius and myself all said something … "

[A general request was voiced for the point to be read again.]

Puntius Stigma: "New participation in 'the group' is for the time being likely to emerge through the development of working relations with the existing participants … our strength lies in ideology, not in numbers."

Oscellatus: "That oversimplifies, that's all. I think that can be used in a way. I thought we were going to discuss it. That's not the *whole* thing."

Pongo Pongo: "Can I ask a question? I haven't been here to hear the whole thing but why is this such an issue? Is it something special or has each point been discussed like this?" [explanation follows]

Jarbua: "'Our strength comes from our ideology, not our numbers'. That's like saying 'our strength comes from our force not our clarity'. It's a totally false distinction when you're talking about a group. I mean you cannot separate the two *ever, ever, ever,* from one another. "

Metae: "Would you say ideological clarity is the result of struggle?"

Jarbua: "No: I think ideological struggle is fine. That's not what I disagree with. I disagree with 'and not in numbers' … "

Puntius Stigma: "It seems to me, pragmatically here, that one has to have priority over the other."

Jarbua: "See, I don't think the ideological struggle can take place in the closet and then go out and try and confront the real world, you know…"

Ramirezi: "Can I say something? Can I point out just one thing? In other instances you have said we can't make definitions without 'ideological clarity'.

Jarbua: "What?"

Ramirezi: "You have said in other instances that we can't go on without ideological clarity', "

Jarbua: "I don't think we can. But I think that clarity comes about through exposure to other ideas."

Puntius Stigma: "You've got to read the two parts together: participation would be participation in the ideological struggle."

Clarius: "I don't think that's coming through, It's a false conflict to put the issue as one between ideology and numbers."

Badis Badis: "Hear, hear! No one has said there should not ever be new members, as many as we can get. The question really comes down to, are we going to do it before we come to a position of basic unity or *after*? At what point do we try to make unity explicit: at 14 or at 3000? I assume that we're going to reach some kind of unity at this table?"

[pause in tape]

Ramirezi: "Class analysis is an unstable situation. We are trying to deal with it dialectically. I don't have any worry about the 'the numbers', all I have is a question about *how*? Proceedings for admitting those people?"

Badis Badis: "I think the question also is *when*?"

Oscellatus: "We're all committed to socialism. Am I right when I say that? [no disagreement]. All right, that's a point we all agree on."

Jarbua: "The only one I've agreed on."

Oscellatus: "Okay. Then I think that when we start breaking that down all sorts of divisions occur, right? Now, it's the breaking down and informing of those divisions that is the point where we need influx of new information. There are existing socialist struggles in the world, be they Maoist, Feminist or Anarchist. (Anarchist is not so much in the world unfortunately.) But nonetheless there are articulated currents of socialist thought that we have to consider and, perhaps, in our working, bring in some new people. We can examine that, in terms of dialogue, and I think we have the clarity-we're all committed to socialism. That's our only unification at this point. "

Bellica: "I don't think this point sets up any dichotomy between ideological struggle and numbers. I think it's strictly a tenuous strategy at this point. Accepting the fact that we're not likely to attract great hoards of people, accepting the fact that we do have certain ideological positions which we are trying to put into effect but which may not 'attract' other people, it's likely that these great hoards of people are going to get interested strictly through their relationship to us, It's simple. It's really not a dichotomy Jarbua,"

Jarbua: "But see, I realize that what I have to say doesn't count for much in this group: But I said before: whether or not I

could accept this package was dependent upon the way in which we ideologically went on or, the way in which ideological struggle within the group went on. It's as simple as that. I can't agree and then find out what I've agreed to and then go on with it. I mean certain people have priorities about organization and other people have priorities about other values other than organization."

Ramirezi: "Gosh, you are the one who put emphasis on organization at the start of these meetings."

Oscellatus: "Can you phrase it another way acceptable to you and to the rest of us?"

Puntius Stigma: "Sure."

Bellica: "Why not say our strength is based on ideological struggle?"

Oscellatus: "Exactly, fine."

[Agreement is announced, agreed point is read—'unorganised' conversation ensues about who might 'come into the group'. Pongo Pongo asks what's going on and is brought up to date.]

Ramirezi: "Do we understand that this is subject to the approval of the group?"

Oscellatus: "Earlier there was a consensus that there would be a kind of transitory period in which we would try to enact some of these things so that those of us with doubts can see how well it's working, whether they're going to feel coerced. It's like fish and the water … "

Puntius Stigma: "Precisely in terms of nobody totally disagreeing with this *it has to come out in practice …*

Oscellatus: "Within the context set up in (Provisional) A&L of—I don't know maybe this introduces the problem of sub-groups—anyway, there would be an attempt to begin this sort of work with a PAL called Doggy and Rat … whatever, one could begin that work between now and the fall. In the fall we would review how one felt about that experience. I mean I think Jarbua, Clarius and some of the others could see ourselves working in that collective way and try it out, I think maybe Pongo Pongo and Ramirezi and others could as well."

Pongo Pongo: "I don't know what you mean."

Oscellatus: "It's about testing the water in a certain way. Seeing how it actually will function because some of us will have certain fears about it being coercive but one won't know until one fucking tries."

Pongo Pongo: "Of course it's coercive!"

Oscellatus: "Leave it to you to say it."

Pongo Pongo: "Of course it's coercive. What is this [the point of unity …] ?"

Oscellatus: "In such a way that it destroys the whole basis for socialism, put it that way. Let it be put in some sort of terms that you have rejected too, I mean it's coercive in a sort of brutalized and totalitarian way."

Jarbua: "Socialism, it seems to me, is to provide the conditions of individual freedom, not to provide for the conditions of mob rule … There can't be any individual freedom under capitalism just because of the nature of the social coercion. Now if there can be individual freedom under socialism, I think there can, and that's why people are working toward socialism … "

Bellica: "The whole point of capitalism *is* that you *are* an individual."

Jarbua: "But because you're not an individual in the sense of a super-star (you're) an individual in the sense of having the freedom to challenge the institutions."

Pongo Pongo: "Jarbua, can I say something, this is fucking coercive."

Jarbua: "Of course it is."

Pongo Pongo: "It is coercive. I don't need outside people to convince me that those points of unity point toward socialism. I watch my relationships with Punkay, Bellica, Hypostomous, with Puntius Stigma and Oscellatus all deteriorate under capitalist conditions, market penetration. This is a way to fix those relations."

Oscellatus: "Then let's see what problems come up with this that might be equally strong but of a different character, we won't know until we try."

Pongo Pongo: "Yeah, but what use is it to say that in order to get away from the flood waters you have to build a bridge but if you build a bridge there 'might' be worse problems on the other side. You have no choice. We have no choice. We have to go on."

Oscellatus: "That's all I'm saying."

Pongo Pongo: "Of course it could be a

disaster."

Oscellatus: "Exactly. So I was suggesting a transitional period. So let's just talk amongst ourselves and talk that out … "

Pongo Pongo: "I didn't understand what you said at all. You mean various groups 'trying this out'? I would say that from now on, from next week we have another meeting and begin to put this into practice, and there will be a period of loose ends obviously, Those loose ends can be written down, then the week after we'll come in and see what progress has been made."

Clarius: "What do we think about a transition period? How would it operate?"

Pongo Pongo: "I think two weeks is plenty of time."

Oscellatus: "Two weeks? Puntius Stigma said six months."

Pongo Pongo: "All I want to do is fucking get on with it. Let's have a look at someone's work. Let's get down to talking about some real fucking things."

Metae: "I want to support you because what Oscellatus introduced is 'we all believe in socialism'. There's no problem there, it's not a matter of getting a red flag."

Oscellatus: "I agree."

Metae: "It's a matter of working on how to implement it *in practice*."

Oscellatus: "I agree, but we can't do that in two weeks … "

Metae: "But we have to start now. I think that's what Pongo Pongo is saying."

Oscellatus: "But I agree with Pongo Pongo."

[Confusion is sorted out, apparently.]

Clarius: "Well, is the meeting over?"

Pongo Pongo: "What happened to this? [points to the Points of whatever-they-are-called] What happened to this?"

Badis Badis: "We all agreed."

Pongo Pongo: "You mean we all agreed we were going to shelve it for six months. Is that what we agreed to?"

Clarius and others: "No, No!"

Badis Badis: "What did we agree to then?"

Clarius: "Some people accepted the points. Some people said they had to wait and see. They're willing to work under this but they are waiting to, well, they put their stamp of approval and said this is what I'm doing…"

Hypostomous: "We should have a vote and see who stands where?"

Ramirezi: "Is it going to be that we call the whole thing 'Provisional Art & Language' or is it going to be two sections of A&L? "

Clarius: "All of these points are provisional A&L and if you don't accept them you are just A&L,"

Ramirezi: "Okay, that's what I wanted to clear up—thank you,"

Clarius: "Do we want to … what's the point in voting on this?"

Oscellatus: "A vote? I think a vote is absurd at this point."

Clarius: "Pongo Pongo hasn't been here so … "

Oscellatus: "I think it's about time we did something grey for a change … "

Pongo Pongo: "Are you kidding! This looney-bin has been grey all the time, Nothing's happened,"

Clarius: "How are you going to make it not grey. By proclaiming Provo A&L? You can't do that."

Ramirezi: "Those who accept it completely *are* provos."

Clarius: "What's wrong with being grey for a while?"

Pongo Pongo: "It's been grey for eight fucking years! "

Albifrons: "Well some of us are for a vote."

[general uproar]

Oscellatus: "Can I say that I think there's a consensus that we're going to try it. Some people have made up their mind already before it's even started, I think that's their prerogative but some of us are not able to do that, So we want to get involved and see what's going to happen."

Albifrons: "Then stay A&L,"

Clarius: "You don't have to make that decision now unless you want to, I don't think it needs to be that much of a rigid thing,"

Ramirezi: "I'd like to know, I'd like to know who are the provos and who is A&L?"

Punkay: "So would I; I don't want it to go out … "

Ramirezi: "I don't want it to go out of

here … "

Pongo Pongo: "Who's going to be here in 2 weeks and submit to the provisos of provo?"

Ramirezi: "Let's do it. Let's take our stands."

Badis Badis: "We all are I think?"

Pongo Pongo: "All right, in 2 weeks we come here and keep on with this struggle. , ."

Ramirezi: "Is everybody going to be A&L or is everybody a provo or what the fuck?"

[uproar ensues]

Oscellatus: "Yeah, I think so and then technically A& L will also exist .. ,"

Pongo Pongo: "But we've got to have a vote. I've got to know who is commited because this demands commitments, You know, this is hard. You've got to be commited."

Oscellatus: "I wish you had been here earlier, I really wish you had for fucking sake…"

[uproar, uproar]

Jarbua: "So do I."

[more uproar]

Pongo Pongo: "I'm sorry, I apologize."

Oscellatus: "Then don't be such a fucking hard-liner."

Albifrons: "Well I was here and I agree with Pongo Pongo."

Jarbua: "We all know that Albifrons. You always do."

[uproar]

Oscellatus: "That's been taken for granted *a priori*."

Albifrons: "Well, yes, I think that my ideology is close to Pongo Pongo's."

Oscellatus: "Can we, can we, can we avoid this right now."

Pongo Pongo: "Yeah, 'let's avoid it right now' Oscellatus."

Jarbua: "you can't speak for Pongo Pongo or think for Pongo Pongo."

Albifrons: "No, but I can agree with him."

Pongo Pongo: "All right, I disqualify myself for being absent for 40 minutes."

Albifrons: "I think what he says is clear."

Punkay: "All right, I was here. I was here. First of all I don't see how Pongo Pongo being absent for that time casts such a suspensory note … "

Badis Badis: "He agrees with the points."

Albifrons: " … on anything that he says."

Punkay: "… on his participation at this time, I will say, let's go around and see who is going to do what. Those who don't accept the points are A&L, those who do are provos. I'm not interested in setting up a situation where people see if socialism works and then hop on the bandwagon,"

Oscellatus: "This isn't socialism [points to the provisos] so it doesn't work."

Punkay: "This is *working* for socialism, This is how socialism *works*."

[uproar, uproar]

Oscellatus: "I'm not taking *your* word for it."

Punkay: "Not later, but now Oscellatus, right now … "

[pandemonium]

Oscellatus: "Yeah, well you're dreaming."

Punkay: "Wake me when it's over."

Clarius: "I don't like this."

Oscellatus: "It's macho mentality and it's really fucking this all up."

[pandemonium]

Clarius: "It's so tough when we assume that attitude. If someone has very valid personal reasons and reservations but they generally support this then they can't put down Provo. You are saying that unless you support these things *all the way* through you're out. That's a really harsh way to put it and that's the way for making it divisive … "

Pongo Pongo: "There's no room for personal reservations anymore, I … "

Ramirezi: "It's not a question of making it a divisive issue. How do you propose we go on working? What are we going to do for this period? When we go to AMCC what are you going to do?"

Jarbua: "Speak from my beliefs … "

Pongo Pongo: "From *your* beliefs? Not from *ours*, not from *ours*, you know … "

Jarbua: "It's feminism. How can I speak for you when the discussion is feminism? You don't know a Goddamn thing about it. Not literally, but I can't speak for you."

Clarius: "It forms the basis for us to work together. "

Ramirezi: "My relationship to it is ideological."

Clarius: "I know it is and you can speak from that point of view. But does that mean

that your ideology is the ideology represented here? Is what you say going to come out as the ideology represented in these points?"

Bellica: "The first 3 points are very important. If some people will not operate on the basis of the first 3 points then there's no reason for anybody here to trust them,"

Punkay: "This isn't a menu that we're looking at; I want to have soup, I want to follow with a salad."

Ramirezi: "I'm not trying to divide or cut off dialogue. I would just like to see some clarification instead of people taking refuge in obscurity. You say you are going to AMCC and speak from your beliefs—right? Well I'm going to go to AMCC and say that whatever I say is going to be advised by my relationship to this document."

Oscellatus: "What does this tell you about ideology?"

Ramirezi: "That this group is no longer interested in functioning as a collection of individuals, you know, who are free-floating and have a *laissez-faire* attitude toward strategic …"

Oscellatus: "After you say that, what do you say? And that's the point where we *really* start to talk about ideology."

Bellica: "Oscellatus, Ramirezi is not saying that we as individuals are 'taken over' by an alien ideology, that is A&L. Jarbua's talking as if her identity vanishes the moment she 'joins' A&L—it's very revealing. What all this has to do with right now is how we represent ourselves in thc market and that has ideological ramifications.' ,

Ramirezi: "Exactly."

Punkay: "You wanted to see if this would work … "

Oscellatus: "All I'm objecting to is the very harsh macho way you're putting it. It's in human terms I'm objecting, not in terms of the content. Okay, as I've said all along, let's get it going and find out."

Hypostomous: "The first step to get going is to agree."

Group: "On the points."

Oscellatus: "Certainly, doing it for a provisional period. When the provisional period's over and when the nuts are tightened that's the point at which some people have to make decisions. "

Hypostomous: "The provisional period is for something else. It's for getting rid of early garbage. In 2 weeks when we have a meeting this group will be working differently,"

Jarbua: "I think you're really being unrealistic. "

Bellica: "Well we all are. The four of us could have a rising economic star. "

Multifasciata: "To go back to our situation in Canada; it's like Oscellatus' here."

Jarbua: "It's not operating in the same way at all."

Multifasciata: "Sure it is."

Pongo Pongo: "Listen, we can't stop because some of us think we're 'special.'"

Bellica: "We're all giving up something Jarbua. But something has to be decided now,"

Oscellatus: "We can't see it unless something starts—I agree with that point, I don't know, if it's going to be a totally authoritarian terrorist, psychological terrorist, situation. Well then we'll fucking find out by working in it."

Jarbua: "We're finding out now,"

Oscellatus: "Well, we are to a certain extent … it's true, until people overcome their weaknesses. "

Clarius: "Let's resolve this now. I can agree with the points but like I said when the work comes up things may be incompatible, Does that say enough about working with me, If I accept this, I may not accept it in three weeks from now."

Punkay: "These three points seem to represent the minimal conditions,"

[The group decides to go around and say whether or not each one will support the points, "in principle as well as practice".]

Pongo Pongo: "All right, I will."

Badis Badis: "How are we going to … Uh, I agree."

Ramirezi: "*We're* going around; I agree to them,"

Albifrons: "I agree,"

Oscellatus: "I half agree, I half abstain,"

[Uproar and pandemonium-controversy over vote versus statement of opinion ensues.]

Hypostomous: "I agree."

Puntius Stigma: "I agree."

Bellica: "I agree."

Metae: **"I agree."**
Multfasciata: "I agree."
Jaculator: **"I agree."**
Jarbua: **"I abstain."**

Punkay: **"I agree."**
Clarius: **"I've stated mine already."**

[Hallucinatory silence follows …]

REVIEW

NOT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTRADICTION

KATHRYN BIGELOW

It is the purpose of our journal to try to establish some kind of community practice. Those who are interested, curious, or have something to add (be it pro or con) to the editorial thrust … the revaluation of ideology … of this first issue are encouraged, even urged, to contribute to following issues. **The Fox #1**

If you are concerned with trying to reclaim art as an instrument of social and cultural transformation, in exposing the domination of the culture/administrative apparatus as well as art which indolently reflects that apparatus, you are urged to participate in this journal. Its editorial thrust is ideological. It aims at a contribution to the wider movement of social criticism/transformation. (Our contribution will be on the art front but by no means limited to the fixed context-closure of 'art'.) We need a broad social base in positive opposition to the ideological content and social relations reproduced by 'official' culture. **The Fox #2**

Given the parameters prescribed by the Introductory Statements above, the function of *The Fox* seems like the unintelligible manifestation of contradiction.

• Theory pertaining to class issues is packaged for market acceptance. The class issues cannot be incorporated into a 'methodological' understanding of the magazine.

• Class conditions in local culture (the art community?) appear to serve as a paradigm or model for *the* class struggle.

• Criticism of the capitalist society, formulated as: " … positive opposition to the ideological content and social relations reproduced by 'official' culture", or 'radical' *revision*, can never go beyond the limits set by capitalist ideology.

• The fundamental economics of Marxist analysis does not enter into the discourse on socialist theory.

• The magazine *as a commodity* is not analyzed in relation to its ideology, its methodology and its societal demands.

• "Editorial thrust" is the qualification given by the Introductory Statements for the context of the articles. The content of the articles, as qualified by the Introductory Statements, is ideological. The context appears to be predicated upon the content, editorial thrust is then predicated upon ideology. All articles, however, are individuated *against* the editorial presupposition of 'collective' ideology.

The above constitute aspects of the contradiction between productive modes and the relations of production within *The Fox*. It is a "fundamental contradiction"[1] of a social system whose" … organization principle necessitates that individuals and groups repeated-

ly confront one another with claims and intentions that are … incompatible."[2]

Dialectics holds that contradictoriness within a thing is the cause of its development; incompatibility or contradiction is comprehended as the universal struggle of opposites, the basis for motion, the process of permutation of all things; the force of qualitative change. Dialectics effectively utilizes contradiction through the method of objective analysis of its movement, growth, relations of parts and reciprocal processes.

The contradiction within *The Fox* is *not* synthesized or developed as a process to be objectively analyzed as the determinant of direction or of function. The contradiction is not utilized as a communicative process between theory and practical application. The aspects of the contradiction are covered-up or treated as antagonistic and diversionary to the 'cause'. The presupposed aims in opposition to the consequence of practice are thus abstracted from the fundamental procedures of the magazine. The condition between the opposites, thereby emerging as conflict, is the result of a latent unity. When viewed against the background of socialist theory, lack of dialectics is yet one more particularity to add to the contradiction.

Such are the conditions which render the function inexplicable and subject to question. What is "community practice" in practice *within* the magazine rather than just defined by the articles? What is the basis for group organization of working relations? To what degree does market palatability obscure class issues? Can criticism be of a 'higher order' than what it criticizes? Is opposition to capitalist culture just the *theme* of the criticism or is the magazine itself a methodology for opposition? *Where* is the opposition? Is *The Fox* making distinctions between culture and society? *What is* the ideology determining the content of the articles? What is the economic gain or social mobility of the commodified *Fox*, i.e., what is the level of self-interest? Is practice being sold as a product? Is the real struggle toward socialist consciousness being exploited for self-reification of 'radical' identity?

The nexus of these questions is a mode of socialization reproducing bourgeois-liberal thinking. The art world, the social base of *The Fox* and typification of bourgeois ideology, serves to reify this distinction. Moreover, bourgeois ideologies" … pennit no intuitive access to relations of solidarity within groups or between individuals"[3], thus promoting individualism and with that, the negation of contradiction. "In given conditions, opposites possess identity and consequently can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other"[4], i.e., given determined processes, the law of dialectics maintains that contradiction is the means or impetus for change. With the negation of contradiction, the subversion of bourgeois ideology is obstructed by a social system, a construct of bourgeois ideology, that does not allow itself to be transformed.

New York, New York

NOTES

1. Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1975, p. 27.
2. Ibid., p. 27.
3. Ibid., p. 78.
4. Mao Tse-Tung, *Four Essays on Philosophy*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1968, p. 72.

FOR ARTISTS MEETING

SARAH CHARLESWORTH

There are a lot of people around looking for 'alternatives'. Just what is changing, might be changed, must be, is a matter hotly debated and sides, factions, opinions, demands, form and reform, group and regroup as we all individually and collectively search out and construct the personal and social basis of this often abstract vision we commonly call 'change'. Some feel they have the answers; others are looking, and I often feel that it is in the uncertainty of our often naive and awkward search that we begin to approach the unfamiliar territory (discovery) which lies beyond conditioned response.

A common assumption is that when and where we are in a position to locate specific 'problems', the logical next step is to posit 'solutions' which offer if not a 'resolution', at least a clear-cut 'strategy' toward the 'resolution' of those problems. This leads of course to endless and often circular debates about the 'problematicity' of the problems so conceived, not to mention the myriad conflicting values, interests and ideologies which are imbedded in and reflected through the various short and long term 'resolutions' so proposed. While a certain form of 'logical regression' which calls for the continued probing of historical, ideological and social roots or 'origins' of critical, personal and social thought and behavior might appear counter-productive, it is only in the context of our, own 'progressive' ideology that such serious self and societal reexamination could be considered unimportant or a waste of time.

I suspect, and it is indeed one of the major points which I wish to stress in this paper, that rather than being 'non-productive' in terms of arriving at clear-cut 'solutions', such discussions and collective struggle toward understanding are not only valuable and healthy in terms of personal growth and change but provide in and of themselves, a *very tentative basis* of social change, through a process of social interaction which occurs *outside of* (but not independent of) specific institutional forms. Perhaps *one* of the major factors which continually inhibits such natural and human processes of change is the very mode in which we are socially conditioned to think in such abstract and often ideologically inseparable terms as 'problems' and 'solutions'. How often are the 'solutions' which we seek born of the same ideological fabric as the 'problems' they seek to overcome? 'Solutions' are not something which occur' out there' and are the *sole* responsibility or tight of this or that social class or section, those in power or those without; nor are they something which we can hope for while continuing to think and do, just as we have always done. We have at this point no guide book for liberation, only guide lines, the history of women and men struggling cooperatively or in competition toward that end. If we allow ourselves to be sidetracked or diverted by false dichotomies—art *or* politics, theory *or* practice, product *or* process, personal *or* social; we miss the opportunity to liberate ourselves by struggling against the incredible fragmentation of our thought and action

the continual forced separation of subjective 'ideals' and objective conditions, which is above all else the hallmark of bourgeois culture.

The realization that one has been functioning within a repressive ideological space brings with it the hope, the necessity, of attempting to combat those repressive conditions (and consciousness) while at the same time struggling to free oneself from the quicksand of our entrenchment therein. Our (potential) strength lies in our collective ability to synthesize through our newly developing social relations, a mode of work which is in keeping both with our unique and particular skills and insights, as well as with our most profound commitments to radical social change. If we see the 'meaning' of art contained within the parameters of art historical ideology and its institutionalized forms of commodity exchange and the 'meaning' of politics located within the collective radical opposition to such rationalized ideology and fetishized forms, we are bound individually and collectively to the schizophrenic impotency of working continually for and against ourselves and, I suspect, our not uncommon aim.

The 'art-world' as we know it is not a permanent social category. The coming together of artists and art workers as a means to overcoming individual alienation cannot substitute in the long run for our determined struggle to overcome alienation as a manifestation of specific social and economic relations. We do not meet, in my opinion, to fortify ourselves against the onslaught of historical change but to collectively provide a context, a means to our responsible participation therein. Just as the commodification of 'Art' within our culture is a travesty to the very meaning of art as a creative self and world transformatory practice, the often brutal and dehumanizing coercive politiking which is often associated with certain authoritarian notions of 'Politics' is a betrayal of their humanitarian ends. We must be wary of people who think that writing about the necessity of 'ideological penetration of class barriers' constitutes some kind of 'ideological penetration of class barriers'. While developing class consciousness is crucial to understanding and perhaps altering our relationship to historical processes of social change; understanding the complex ideological, psychological and spiritual dimensions of sex and class oppression and alienation are likewise a critical dimension of that struggle. Twentieth century battles cannot be fought, I suspect, according to Victorian battle plans.

We must realise that we are not only victims of a system which exploits and appropriates the meaning of our work; we are victims of an ideology and a language which continually alienates us from one another even in our struggle to overcome such alienation. To accept (without reinterpreting or altering) a language either 'bourgeois' or 'revolutionary' is to accept a form, an order of priorities. From this perspective, revolutionary social practice becomes increasingly a question of shaping the world to meet the demands of the model, rather than the reverse.

To me the overwhelming significance of the spontaneous coming together of individuals in groups such as *Artists Meeting for Cul-tural Change*, to meet, to talk, to work together, is not the convivial interchange of ideas which permits us to 'let off steam' or assuage our troubled consciences—the real value and import of such meetings lies precisely in the fact that it is only in our social interaction, in the gradual and often extremely frustrating process of developing a clear self and social consciousness that any alternative basis for responsible cultural and political action can emerge. The process of our collective recognition of the 'problems' and our move toward their 'resolution' are one. In the *shifting* of values and priorities, which emerge through such endeavour, we find not a static formula, but a dynamic and self-transforming process which is one understanding of the value and meaning of our "work'. *In this context*, individual and collective work are not ultimately at odds.

New York, New York

Following are some of the papers which have been presented to or developed through Artists Meeting For Cultural Change. It is important to understand that they are not 'position papers' in the sense of representing a collective group opinion or 'position' on these issues. They are rather, papers which have been developed either individually or collaboratively by participants of Artists Meeting to serve as focal points or papers within the context of the group process to initiate further discussion and thought. While they are taken 'out of context' here, it is in an understanding of their broader context, they remain relevant.

Artists Meeting for Cultural Change is a very loose 'coalition' of mostly artists and art workers who have been meeting regularly at Artists Space (155 Wooster Street, N. Y.C.) on Sunday evenings at 8 P.M. It is an open meeting and anyone interested in participating in discussions or group activities is encouraged to do so. Such a process demands commitment however and very irregular attendance of participants poses obstacles to developing group consciousness and effectiveness.

To The American Art Community from Artists Meeting for Cultural Change

Next September, as one of its four Bicentennial exhibitions, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City will present a show entitled *Three Centuries of American Art*—just what you might have expected under the circumstances—a package deal, originating in April at the De Young Museum in San Francisco.

But this show isn't simply another example of bureaucratic mediocrity as it is entirely culled from the private collection of John D. Rockefeller III and includes no Black artists and only one woman artist.

Try and imagine Rockefeller and his staff of experts quaintly constructing a history of American art from the complacent viewpoint of the power elite. What this show is not is *Three Centuries of American Art*; it is, however, a blatant example of a large cultural institution writing the history of American art as though the last decade of cultural and social reassessment had never taken place.

We, the undersigned, strongly object to the collusion of the De Young and Whitney Museums and John D. Rockefeller III in using a private collection of art, with its discriminatory omissions, to promote upper class values and a socially reactionary view of American art history.

Several of us met on December 5 with Tom Armstrong, director of the Whitney, to discuss our objections to this show. We stressed that such a celebration of exploitation and acquisition was hardly an appropriate homage to our long-buried revolution. Mr. Armstrong instinctively resorted to bureaucratic diversionary tactics, stated *"I'm not willing to go into a dialogue with you or your groups,"* and left us completely unsatisfied. On December 8, a larger art community meeting was called to discuss possible actions against the Whitney and other museums and cultural institutions around the nation which are using the Bicentennial to reinforce the values, taste, prestige and power of the ruling class.

Not incidentally, the Whitney is the only museum in New York City never to have made use of Black professional staff in curatorial or even sub-curatorial rank, despite promises to the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition by the previous administration. The museum's major Bicentennial extravaganza—*Two Hundred Years of American Sculpture*—was selected by seven curators; four of them guests, none of them Black. The exhibition schedule through 1978 includes only two shows in which Black artists are expected to exhibit. Nor, despite gains on the Feminist front provoked by lengthy protests in the Winter of 1970-71, is there a single full-scale one-woman exhibition planned in that period.

We object to the increasingly wide-spread museum policy of presenting and celebrating the private collections of art of the upper class. Such curatorial faits accomplis can only serve to abrogate the social responsibilities of these cultural institutions.

In addition to these points—particularly the important one of the inflexible use of private collections—exhibitions like the Rockefeller Collection raise broader social and cultural issues: the prevailing view of art as a commodity in this society, what it means to participate at all in Official Culture, the responsibility of the artists' community to the general public, and whether the current cultural institutions are the proper mediators between artist and public, communities and their culture. Abominations similar to that of the Rockefeller Collection are being perpetuated in your communities for the Bicentennial. By joining together we can be nationally effective and end the cynical political manipulation of our art and the history of American art.

We will be picketing the Whitney on January 3, 1976 at 2:00 p.m. Additional strategies to be employed in the next year include: picketing to coincide with key American history holidays, alternative street exhibitions and an alternative catalogue, a slide show for educational purposes and letters to Congresspersons. This letter is the first step in setting up a national network to protest such misuse of art and artists for the Bicentennial—and afterwards.

We urge you to join in our discussions and participate wherever you are and on whatever level you are able to. We welcome both practical and ideological suggestions. What are you opinions? Can you mobilize other artists and/or groups to participate and sign this petition? Can you copy this petition and distribute it more broadly in your state or community? What are the problems in your area? How can we help you deal with them?

If you have $5 or $10 send that too; we need money to continue these mailings and cover the costs of advertisements and printing. Make checks payable to *Artists Meeting for Cultural Change* and mail to: *P.O. Box 728 c/o The Fox, Canal Street Station, New York, N.Y. 10013.*

December 14, 1975.

Ad Hoc Women Artists Committee
Art & Language
Art Worker's News
Artists & Writers Protest
Black Emergency Cultural Coalition
Creative Women's Collective
The Fox
Guerrilla Art Action Group
W.E.B.
Women in the Arts
Women's Art Registry

Carl Andre
Benny Andrews
Rudolf Baranik
Arnold Belkin
Karl Beveridge
Camille Billops
Willie Birch
Vivian Browne
Ian Burn
Sarah Charlesworth
Michael Chisholm
Carole Conde
Michael Corris
Peter Frank
Leon Golub
Hans Haacke
Suzanne Harris
Alex Hay
Preston Heller
Elizabeth Hess
Jene Highstein
Leandro Katz
Joseph Kosuth
Nigel Lendon
Sol LeWitt
Lucy Lippard
Andrew Menard
Irving Petlin
Mel Ramsden
Ginny Reath
Miriam Schapiro
Joan Semmel
Jackie Skiles
Pat Steir
May Stevens
Mayo Thompson

A TENTATIVE POSITION PAPER
Prepared by the Position Paper Committee of "Artists Meeting for Cultural Change", to be read February 22 1976.
(Committee: AM, PH, MC, JB, VK, MS, JK, EH, GR, LK, AMc.)

That many of us feel concerned about our practise in the art community is demonstrated by the numbers of us who are regularly coming to these Sunday meetings. That there are numerous conflicting opinions, interests and anxieties about the function of these meetings is evidenced by the tension present at every one of them.

It seems clear that if this group is to flourish and be useful to each of the participants, then it has got to come to terms with these tensions by establishing a real and viable basis for continuing.

Whilst the Rockefeller issue has provided a new and temporary solidarity it should be realised that interest will quickly deteriorate once this urgency has passed. This temporary focus may be useful and indeed necessary, but it is not sufficient reason in itself for a continuing group dialogue. The group will at best become a rather dull super-ad-hoc committee, the limits of its actions and interests being defined only by the next external, cultural atrocity that rears its obvious head, the limits of its power being a constant reaction, a series of exhausting fights to put a stop to events that have their real basis elsewhere, in the very structure of this economic system and in our relationship to that system. It will only be dealing with manifestations of a cultural unbalance rather than its causes.
To put it bluntly: it becomes both boring, and destructive of our continuing interest, to be <u>exclusively</u> concerned with action, at the expense of understanding. The ideas within the group will have no chance to evolve: we will be doomed to sitting there each with our own private beliefs, condemned to throwing in tactical ideas. Nothing fundamentally, in ourselves, is enabled to change. Important as these protest actions are, if they become the raison d'etre of the group, they will become diversionary and counter-productive.

As yet, there is not any internally generated, theoretical basis for this groups continuing. At present we are not one group, in the sense of individuals sharing a particular set of beliefs, but we are a group in the sense of individuals sharing a sense of uncertainty.

This uncertainty must be where we begin.

The question is, how do we begin to explore the nature of this uncertainty? There doesn't seem to be very much at this point, that isn't open to question. We need a basis from which to begin.

With these problems in mind, the committee would like to recommend that the group devote a regular and considerable amount of time, to study, discussion, learning- as a group - seeing this dialogue as already being a step towards a new form of practise. Within this context, we can begin to test our ideas, theories, suppositions and attitudes, collaboratively, and begin to develop as we proceed, an understanding of the way the system in which we are presently operating, functions. In so doing we might begin to understand the nature of a group practise and how it might alter that very system.

This process would not need to detract from the continuous and careful attention to immediate, external problems, such as Whitney-type situations, but these situations should not be considered the most important, long-term function of the group.

We feel that it will be essential to set aside at least one hour of every group meeting, in which to specifically study and discuss particular questions. To set the ball rolling for the first few of these occasions, some individuals within the committee, have already prepared brief papers on a number of topics. These are: Art & Feminism, Collaboration, Imperialism, Artist as Intellectual, The Culture Industry, The role of Museums.

It should be emphasised that these papers have been spontaneously prepared by individuals, that they represent starting points, not ends in themselves. They do not "represent" the committee. Like the group itself, the committee has heterogeneous views. It is to be hoped that, gradually, these discussions will generate other topics, and that individuals within the group will feel motivated to prepare their own 'starting papers'. It is also to be hoped that we will all begin to get something concrete out of participating, something that will feed back into our own personal practise.

IF YOU THINK WE ARE ALL HERE TONIGHT TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE OF FEMINISM YOU ARE WRONG

Feminism is not an issue. It can not be cordoned off and therefore seperated from other theoretical discussions. The objective of this paper is to raise consciousness through a critical analysis of the dynamics in this group utilizing feminism as a methodology. "Revolutionary politics is linear. It must move from individual, to small group, to whole society." (J.Mitchell) As individuals we would like to begin by saying that neither of us are positing ourselves as feminist authorities for the very concept would negate the development of process by forcing us to argue a position.

The public realm of art and politics has historically remained male territory. Because men consistently do not respond seriously to women's work they have been placed in a position which is adjacent to mainstream development. The situation is similar in every sphere. The result has been a world wide bonding together of women. Feminism is teaching women to recognize a personal commonality in exchange for relinquished individual power.

Feminism is a political movement which actively attempts to develop new social relations."The unconscious is itself filled with ambivalence and emotional opposition which yield great power over our actions, any political movement which fails to take this into account runs the risk of eventually becoming what it sought to replace." (J.Lazarre) Hence the personal is crucial in developing a new politic. This necessitates an analysis of self-dynamics and personal assumptions in order to learn new behaviors that do not reproduce traditional patriarchal attitudes.

If dialogue in this group continually emerges as an assertion of intellect, we will only perpetuate the seperation of personal from political- and in turn art work from ideology. We must fight against making revolution with an army of words. This obstruction of communication prohibits the creation of

new social relations and allows several dominant figures to manipulate the effectiveness of the group. There is a need to define work in political and personal terms. The seperation of the two (generally a male phenomena) has resulted in a fragmentation of thought and the development of an "alternative" work personality.

So far there has been no recognition in this room of the social situation we have created. People have come to this group to meet other artists and exchange ideas. Instead we have often presented ourselves as "theoreticians" vying for recognition. The kinds of social dialogues that occur after the meetings and outside the confines of the group context are those that must be brought back into the larger group. It is within these dialogues that the actual exchange of ideas is taking place.

One individual can not create a politicized community. We need each other, and we must analyze the reasons why, rather than merely sanction ourselves by asking the right political questions. We see this as an educational process which takes time and will not come easily. In this group people have remained irresponsible. This process demands commitment. It may well be that Artists Meeting For Cultural Change should disband, for it may only be a pretense for political consciousness.

To recognize one's ordinary humanity is essential to every creative process. This is what will link us together as individuals and enable us to develop community. Working in a group will remain useless if its members compete in the same way that they have been trained to do so in the competitive marketplace. Feminism has layed the groundwork by teaching women to understand the complexities of a group dynamic. We do not seek to emulate well known forms of traditional control which have oppressed all people. We must come together in order to discover new practice. This group could have potential for affecting change.

[illegible] Elizabeth [illegible]

Carolee Schneemann

THE PRONOUN TYRANNY

Women have special problems in realizing their own potential creativity. Every opportunity for learning may be opened to us but we have been prohibited from taking our work too seriously. We are nevertheless expected to excel (to measure up to men), and to put our excellences in the service of men and men's work. Our strongest, most personal impulses, dreams, desires, capabilities are to be channeled into realms described and established by and for men.

Istorically we have constantly been images but somehow forbidden to be image-makers. We may perform but not direct, follow but not innovate. Creativity has been a masculine preserve. A very few feminine mascots emerge. The full istory of woman's innovative creativity has been demeaned, destroyed or buried away.

Woman's aggressive, risk-taking, adventuresome ego expression is repressed: we lack precedents. Language itself excludes us constantly (each person will hang up HIS hat; each student can develop HIS potential; the dreamer and HIS dreams, etc..... primary female gender is assigned to forces or elements guided, controlled by men: the ship-She; our country-She etc..... de-personalized, mythicized.)

Our self-confirmation (ego-energy) is further diverted by our lack of primary authority in the world: the judge, lawyer, doctor, painter, writer, engineer, priest, manager, director ....all assume masculine gender. We join by special dispenstaion, by exception. All this subtly, thoroughly, discourages our free participation in advances of art & technologies; we come to expect a lack of certain capabilities in ourselves. Even success must mean we become a sort of "man", a false female, an unloveable fiend. No matter how we freely choose, the "predestined" conventional role reappears.

In the contemporary art world the most predicable fixity of the masculine pronoun ocurrs with insistent frequency among those artists of the so-called "fifties": "men", "boys", "guys" riddle their conversation (and their writing) like bullets even when they are addressing or refering to women artists as well! Women may be among them by exception or special inclusion but the psychological-gender base of the language directs her to measure up to their heroic masculist mold. She must either constantly male-identify herself, privately receed or protest. Women artists working among male artists is not an end to internalized sexist bias.

From Tape #2 for "KITCH'S LAST MEAL"
(continuing Super 8 film: 1973,74,75,76)

His full identification with us is so taboo, so repellent that he cannot share, extend to us the pronouns for human being. The current cock-eyed twist is this: he remains "cameraman", you become "cameraperson". Why should he be "Cameraperson"? -- he hasn't excluded himself from the language by which his "natural" rights are perpetrated.

He is the chairman, you are welcome as chairperson. The distance is maintained -- snapping mother cunt trying to manipulate big boys, kept at bay!

Artists with tender feelings for their female muse want women artists to understand their exclusions are only loving distances by which they are better able to see us in their own light. We are a special sort of artist -- slightly set apart from these men who welcome us as fascinating guests in their domain.

.....that "man" is the broken away suffix of "woman"; "male" is the broken away suffix of "female", "Father" is the variation on "Mother".

His myths accustom us to think of the female as auxilary .....pulled from his rib - phallic fecundity! We have been shamed, humbled at their monumental obfuscations, silenced. But they are born of us, by us, from us. We are the origin -- the source of production and creation.

* * * * * * *

"Seldom is his life time does a painter receive the recognition accorded Anna Mary Robertson Moses". (book jacket blurb)

"The viewer can only observe each painting as a manifestation of the artist's ability to represent his own concern through his technique". (SOHO NEWS review of shows by Janet Fish and Jane Wilson)

"There's an image in 'Meshes of the Afternoon', often repeated in stills, of Maya Deren standing at the window....It is a reflective image; it is a calm image. It is practically an icon of a person looking into himself." (P. Adams Sitney, "Film Culture" 53-55, '72)

--- samples from an infinite collection ----

The generic use of "man" to stand for male and female is sex biased because "man" also means male person and only by particular context a female person as well. The transaction is one of inclusion, implication, interpolation. Women have constantly to figure out when the use of "man" stands for human beings and when it means a male person. "Human" and "mankind" indicate both genders and are therefore neutral words despite the reoccurring suffix "man".

Books entitled "Man and His Symbols", "Man and His Images" dominate art and istory titles; these automatically force women to double think; coerce our own verbal/ego identity into a pattern which persistently excludes us even while assuming our moderate participation. All the texts which shape and develop our own conceptual capacities are couched in an unremittingly exclusive masculinization of gender. The weight of this bias is such that even some feminist writers feel they must address the reader as "he", maintain the generic "man" for human being or risk trivializing or demeaning their subject. Both Kate Millet and Germain Greer when I objected to their generic use of the masculine pronoun felt that to use a feminine pronoun as well would vitiate their ideas, and a neutral construction would not be grammatically correct.

Nevertheless many authors are confronting the conventions which their language perpetrates. Women have organized in publishing, broadcasting, on educational material, newspapers, to insist on the alienating damage to both female and male of gender exclusivity. The art world may be last among the communication channels to write with inclusive or neutral pronouns. In my studies on gender usage I find that women writers have less difficulty in using the neutral pronouns, in making grammar gender-equitable. Such ease is more exceptional for male writers who too often awkwardly extend their thoughts to include both genders. (Again - worthy exceptions.)

When a writer uses sex biased language, are the ideas negated? Can you trust political programs if the gender usage is reactionary? Getting your genders straight doesn't make a person a non-sexist. The least a writer can do -- male or female -- is set an equitable gender. If the content is sexist the ideational patterns are nevertheless opened to a woman as active principle. I don't trust the ideology where I find gender imbalances -- without exception -- but I have to recognize the value of the information itself. (i.e. almost all of Western literature!) Would you have any time left to work if you wrote a protest letter every time you suffered from gender bias? Should you "correct" - mark up offending books to give the next person the idea?

Until the common pronouns become equitable -- that is, until the male is female-identified (and women can be self-confirming) -- we will know that women are not equally and easily among them, but functioning as tokens, as ritualistic representations to ward off the larger menace to the male's ontological conviction of pre-eminence.

Gender fixity controls and regulates the authentication of information. Language has been used as a screen to keep our actual istory clouded, mythicized. Preistoric artifacts, papyrai, megaliths, mosaics, friezes, sculptures establishing the nature and quality of gynocratic cultures have been subject to actual distortion, mutilations, destruction or masculist interpretation to sustain patriarchial autonomy. In so far as translation is subject to interpretation, istories of ancient and remote cultures have been -- with some notable exceptions -- strained through a masculist sieve.

UNTIL WE RETURN LANGUAGE TO OURSELVES WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONCEIVE OF OUR ISTORY. UNTIL WE RETURN LANGUAGE TO OURSELVES WE WILL NOT REALIZE THE DEGREE TO WHICH OUR INTEGRITY HAS BEEN DEFORMED. UNTIL WE RETURN LANGUAGE TO OURSELVES WE WILL NOT MAKE ESSENTIAL SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS.

"Language is not merely a more or less systematic inventory of the various items of experience....but actually defines experience for us because of our unconscious projection of its explicit expectations into the field of experience.....
..the 'real world' is to a large extent built up on the language habits of the group".

(Edward A Sapir "Selected Writing in Language, Culture and Personality." Univ. of Calif. Press. '49. Brought to my attention by Anthony McCall).

No man can describe, assume, know what living within a phallocentric world does to a woman. When he says he understands it is entangled with his own condition, expectations, given rights, habits...all meshed in the troubled and problematic societal network, but still it is one made by men in their primacy, enacting their realms of hegemony.

And so men have continued dreaming-women. Creating us anew for it must be true we have not - within their conscious memories lived as definable, determined beings as they are to themselves; to their istory, to their pervasive mythos, schema, language structures, ideological shapes of civilization -- all this is defined by men, for men, about men but men don't realize that.....they somehow think we women are in all this by will as well!.....we <u>are</u> visable...our lives merge within theirs.....then why do we insist who they make us is not who they see us as who we feel we are? Why? They see who their mens-vision in its pre-eminence and defensiveness permits us to be. It is this we have to unravel: that men need LEARN TO SEE WOMEN BEING BY WOMEN.

Men cannot imagine what it is to be for 2,000 years a woman dreamt by a man. Men have continually re-invented/invented women once they shattered and usurped her ancient integral culture.

Man is not the "enemy". Many men have such guilty, vague fears because they feel they must insist on their special insights to save themselves and do not grasp the range, dimensions of feminist change crucial to their own self-clarification and social relevance. So long as their natures are divisive they remain subject to an ever spiraling round of manipulations and coercions which keep them rooted in the exploitative systems they want to transform. Effecting their own clarifications involves learning from (listening to) women. (Just as their disciplines have been used by women to define and break-open their own subjections.) The enemy is man-blind determination to continue to define woman and expect her to live within/by his slightly extended, adjusted perceptions of her. He often insinuates his political and social situation as if they are the same as ours; he deflects the lessons of our special repression with his sympathy and conventions. He wants social transformation but fears personal-domestic disruption; he wants women to function freely but resents relinquishing the hierarchical prerogatives of his sex and class. His resistence is most fiercely entrenched in stereotypes of domestic responsibility, and the use of language.

Is the degree of his resistence to feminist principles a measure of his unconscious fear that he will become even to some degree subjugated in the way the female has? That our equality would feel like subjugation? Is his control of the pronouns and their validating cohesions a manifestation of the age-old stereotypes: male equals culture, female equals nature; that the sanctity of the word is in compensation for the ancient creative sanctity of the womb? It has been the patriarchal cultures which determinedly sought to define and delimit the spheres of action, function and influence of the female. The origins of class oppression begin here with the violent, patriarchal revolution appropriating the woman and her children as property. These issues require a further presentation and should be investigated by anyone wanting to uncover men's power in the sexual dialectic.

Women artists in particular need to work together to explicate and enlarge our personal situations as the energizing contexts from which a total re-examination of the tautologies of western culture will be possible. We need one another to examine our fears of a fully assertive feminist consciousness and to bridge the discrepancies between our creative work and our private lives among men with whom we must effect change.

© ('71 - 2/76)

C. Schneemann

Extracts from —
"Missing Gender"

IMPERIALISM AND THE ARTIST

The decision to hold a discussion on imperialism was prompted by the recognition that artists should oppose the use of their work to promote imperialism. Stagnation, depression, war and the destruction of the environment, these are the disastrous consequences of the crisis of world capitalism in the imperialist epoch. Culture - the very survival of humanity is threatened. The current world situation and the brake which imperialism places on economic and social development is the inescapable reality which confronts us in our discussion of social and cultural questions.

Imperialism is the outgrowth of capitalism in decline. If we compare the role which capitalism played in the nineteenth century to its role in the twentieth century, the differences are striking. Capitalism in the period of its ascendency was dynamic in the creation of a working class, industrial development and a world market. This dynamism however, played itself out by the turn of the century.

The endemic tendency toward the centralization and concentration of capital undermined the competition that had spurred the expansion of production and the cheapening of commodities. Depsite their command of raw materials and markets, monopolies do not put an end to the crises which beset capitalism. Depressions in the imperialist epoch become more halting and international in impact. Capitalism no longer emerges from such depressions with vigor, but at a lower level of development.

Capitalism cannot meet the world's basic needs. The underdeveloped countries cannot break the grip of stagnation. Their natural resources are plundered. Land reform remains an empty promise. In the imperialized countries, brutal repression and military dictatorships are propped up and installed by the imperialists. Pinochet, Thieu and Park are notorious examples. "Imperialist fat" on the economies of the advanced countries enables them to tolerate democracy, although in certain periods it is dispensed with. Deepening crisis leads to strong man rule - fascism and military dictatorship.

War between the imperialist powers and the wholesale destrction of industry - the death of millions, these are the imperialist "solutions" to the crisis. The great metropolitan centers which capitalism built in its early stages are razed; and architectural achievements are turned into munitions dumps. Art becomes so much booty which the imperialist loads into state warehouses and museums.

The US and Russia emerged from the second world war as the two leading imperialist powers. Trhough the rebuilding of Europe and Japan and the Bretton Woods agreement (which tied all other currencies to the dollar) US re-ordered the world market to its own interests. (The preeminence of New York in the art world and art speculation is explained in part by the fact that New York is the center of US finance capital. The very high prices which some American artists get for their work is attributable to

the position of the US in the world market.)

Russia's expansion into Eastern Europe was imperialist in character and involved the raiding of plant and equipment from the more industrialized countries such as Czechoslovakia and East Germany. Like the countries which are trapped by western imperialism, these countries are kept on a debt payment treadmill. Their natural resources are drained off by the Russians and imperialist economic relations prevail. That there is resistance to this is demonstrated by the Hungarian revolution in 1956 and the Czech events of 1968.

Detente (or whatever the American ruling class chooses to call it) is an uneasy truce which exists between these two imperialist powers. Vietnam, Angola, the mideast and Portugal however, threaten to blow it apart. Underneath the arms agreements, trade pacts and toasts, the drive toward territorial redivision and war continues.

In the post war boom, the crisis of capitalism was not solved, nor did capitalism enter a new stage of development. (Monopolies and the speculation which imperialism thrives on continue to be a drain on real production.) Prosperity in the advanced countries came largely at the expense of the less advanced countries. But the spring has unwound. The decay of the cities, mass unemployment and political crises signal the end of the boom.

Imperialism and the increased intervention of the state in the economy spawns a monstrous state bureaucracy, police apparatus, and military. The state takes over those sectors of the economy (such as steel and the railroads) which require more capital than any single individual capitalist can supply. Essential services and cultural institutions (museums and universities)are financed by the state. (Virtually every major exhibition is funded through the NEA.) The state is fundamentally a coercive institution whose forces are marshalled to crush uphevals which threaten capitalist rule. Is it any wonder that museums and other cultural institutions are anti-working class and contemptuous of the demands of the most oppressed.

This process of statification reaches its most extreme form in the state capitalist countries of Eastern Europe, Russia, and China, where all industry is commanded by the state. Cultural institutions follow the dictates of the bureaucracy and art which does not meet offical approval is banned. Alternative exhibitions such as the one held in Russia a year or so ago are bulldozed. The artist is told to subordinate himself to the state apparatus or perish.

While the artist in the West does not face the same degree of repression he is faced with growing pressure from the state. The destruction of his art is perhaps more subtle. It is turned into a plaything of the ruling class. Stripped of its irreverence, pop art, for example, was used by it to give the worst commercial aspects of American culture and the coca-colization of the world a funky legitimacy. Many artists succombed and cranked out

...tery. Where art is used to promote US nationalism, the artist must have no part of it.

And what about art in the underdeveveloped countries. Imperialism there ATTEMPTS TO ~~has~~ popular culture of ~~any of~~ its rebellious tendencies.

V. King

THEORY & DAILY LIFE, MEN & THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT*

I took responsibility for addressing the group after observing with others that the energy of these discussions decays at certain points while the meeting is going on and is immediately restored as soon as the meeting is over;

-when we examine the vulnerability of our private roles and situations in relation to what is being discussed

-when some feel that concessions of an ideological character are being made for the sake of the peculiarity of such roles & situations and the interrelations among ourselves.

As members of a false community we find ourselves here defining the nature of modern oppression and making this known to each other.

Within the context of these discussions we encounter ourselves in the process of becoming more real and of demystifying our own illusions.

We also, however, find ourselves inside the misery of being unable to make contact and communicate freely.

Raising our levels of consciousness should not only radicalize our activities and ideas but it should also make it possible for us to live and think better, and to realize that we all come here with authentic needs.

Inside our poverty, ideological notions urging unity and clarity seem sometimes to substitute for weapons of mutual invalidation in the marketplace of domestic class war as instruments to establish merely vague prestigious hierarchies of various degrees of radicalism: that is the misery of daily language in which we insist on having become experts.

The revelation of personal constraints is the struggle which makes ideology out of daily life. When we continue our discussions by only referring ourselves to the variety of notions available through the production of specialized separate ideology within the history of ideologies, then we enter a museum in which we are again in the hands of technocrats and specialists.

Daily life should be our main source for distinguishing what is real in the ideological pandemonium. Theory itself is life <u>when everything is possible</u>. If theory deceives itself by ceasing to represent reality and is rejected into boredom, then it becomes the misery of theory.

Ideology is to be used by the living. The meaning of past struggles was rooted in the present of the men and women who fought them.

In politicizing every aspect of daily life we discover that we are condemned to a state of well-being. Well-being means, in the context of alienation, to possess a larger number of poorer objects and of unreal systems to mediate as communication. Politicizing daily life means being at the point of questioning and demystification and being willing to abandon a lifeless position for a living one. Living ideologies can only manifest themselves through real communities, and real communities are born through communication, when personal alienation is realized to be social. Beyond fetishized history, suffering is revealed as stemming from hierarchical social organization. Certainly all members of an organized group will not have the same talents, and it is evident by now that a worker will always write better than a student. But it is because a group in action will have the necessary talents to complement itself that no hierarchy of individual talents could undermine natural equality: it is not the proclamation of an ideal equality which would permit members of real communities all to be beautiful and intelligent, to communicate coherently, but it will be in the revelation of real

abilities by which we become more beautiful, more intelligent and by which we communicate and live better in developing the only game worth the pleasure.....

The women's movement is to me an example of constructing ideology from daily life. Without any intention of negating the women's movement and definitely without proposing a competition of oppression between women and men, and finding myself personally, naturally or politically alienated from this movement and separated as a spectator, I want to communicate that I am often not too sure myself what is being said when I hear the word 'mankind', and that I do not draw a more or less permanent advantage and sense of well-being because my sex symbolizes the gun, the knife and the billyclub. By saying that THIS world is MY world because dominant male oppressors parade their power over others everywhere, I, a male individual, want to manifest no real interest in maintaining that illusion, because that has always symbolized hierarchical predominance in the name of phallocracy, a system and instrument of challenge to oppress and be oppressed through all forms of social blackmail, coercion and extortion. It is that system that has managed to drive men toward the most denigrating notions of humanity: the challenge of the exchange value of sacrifice by which men were conned into the most imbecile points of destruction and self-destruction, given only by that same system the alternative of being referred to as a woman. Phallocracy as a belief and hierarchical system has sustained one of the most repugnant notions in the history of beliefs; that by which some men would rather kill or die than be driven into their category of woman. I fully understand the anger of women against even the involuntary instances of still supporting such beliefs. But if this is a world of men, and therefore my possession, I find myself isolated since I realize that I and most men I know don't even possess the full use of our own lives. Phallocracy as the advertisement and propaganda of the domineering masculine sex is not only the worst enemy of women. In this and in every other society, the worst enemy of women and the worst enemy of men is the ruling class, that is the class of dominant personnel who have appointed themselves as a government which has completely lost all human mastery and that does everything for the production and maintenance of unconsciousness and stupidity.

*This is a statement relating to a discussion held at the March 28th meeting.

Leandro Katz

REVIEW

UNDER THE RUG

MARTHA ROSLER

When is a rug not a rug? When its elevation from the floor to the wall represents its "elevation" from craft to art. I'm not now considering whether the craft-art distinction is valid; there is a *de facto* separation. Selling rugs, I imagine, is rather straightforward; the rugmaker's sensibility is rarely a troublesome issue in the determination of price. Of course, there is special value attached to some, preferably old, rugs regarded as the highest product of certain exotic, less technologically developed societies, just as silk thread and honey are seen as the culmination of the digestive processes of certain insects and as fine wine results from a fortunate set of natural rotting processes. To the connoisseur, what is important are these end-products, which validate his ability to appreciate them, although he is aware that the messy forces of nature have been tamed and managed by specialists interested in his satisfaction. For his part, the connoisseur supplies the consciousness and sensibility lacking in the produce. He has trained his body to be a well-tuned organ of reception, a Venus fly trap of commodities that address the senses. Like the silkworm, the bee, and the fermentation process compared to the connoisseur, groups that produce rugs are in a state of nature—industrious but unself-conscious. A noted artist once remarked in public—compassionately—that such peoples as Africans and Eskimos are not in a position to speculate on the higher, spiritual values, having to attend to lower-order needs, such as food and shelter. On this theory, the human spirit evolves in lockstep with technological progress. Nineteenth-century anthropological justifications of imperialism exist in art as in the rest of middle-class culture.

All this is occasioned by a fleeting showing and sale of rugs at the gallery of the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles. The show, called "Hecho en Mexico" meaning "made in Mexico," was of rugs made by Mexicans from designs supplied by Los Angeles and Texas artists. Like true rug merchants, the promoters of the show hung their rugs for a week, sold them, and moved on, returning to their other holdings, the Lick Skillet Ranch in Texas, featuring Beefmaster cattle, and the Goose Lake Organic Farm in central Mississippi. These ambitiously entrepreneurial young Texans have a germinal empire based on the production of hip consumables: high-grade beef, organic food, "native" artifacts, art. Calling themselves Everlasting Productions, Inc., and sporting a trendy Navaho-derived symbol, they have learned something about packaging from their record-designer friends and even supply T-shirts with their name and symbol, superimposed on the image of a steer. They cagily skirted the issue of craft versus art by selling both. Picture a group of "indians," not "American" ones but "Mexican" ones—Zapotecs of Oaxaca. It is said they learned from Spanish missionaries to use wool from imported sheep and standing looms, rather than cactus fibers and back looms, in making their scrapes. It is further said that in 1928 two weavers adopted the designs they saw on the ruined

walls of the ancient necropolis Mitla, and now Zapotec weavers use diverse sources in designing their serapes and rugs, which they export widely.

This much of Zapotec history was suggested by the promoters' handout. It did not mention that although the weavers have Spanish names, the complicated and eloquent Zapotec language flourishes (although "Zapotec" is a Nahua word), that the ancient Zapotecs had a system of writing, their theocratic-monarchic civilization was highly structured, with organized trade and monumental cities such as Mitla and the earlier Monte Alban, where the largest gold treasure ever discovered in Mexico was found. The rug sellers do not mention the ancient Zapotec's great skill in architecture, ceramics, and metalwork. They do not choose to tell us that the Zapotecs, who cooperated with the Spanish invaders against their Aztec rivals and who readily embraced Christianity and Spanish civilization, were brutalized and dispossessed by the Spanish and decimated by slavery and disease. The Zapotecs, in fact, are a classic instance in the history of settlement of the Americas. When a remnant of the "docile" Zapotecs rebelled in the mid-seventeenth century—retaining allegiance to the Spanish Crown but setting up their own local government—their leaders were seized and whipped or burned to death or mutilated and sent into slavery and their native governor was quartered and a piece hung at each of the four roads entering Tehuantepec. Yet the Zapotecs survived (there are now about a quarter of a million), and in the mid-nineteenth century it was a Zapotec peasant-become-lawyer, Benito Juarez, who led the reform government of Mexico. But in the ideology of salesmen, the past exists simply as the unfolding of their product. The rugmen found it to their advantage to suggest only an essential primitivism of the Zapotecs.

We Americans habitually valorize the products of subject peoples who have passed the point of risk to our way of life, positing that such appreciation is the best measure of atonement for wrongs done by our predecessors. In particular, buying their products (as in the case of Navaho jewelry) and reselling them to collectors, connoisseurs, and others at greatly inflated prices is passed off as a sign of respect. We have accomplished the transformation of these people from ignoble to noble savages, allowing them a place in the chain of production to satisfy our overelaborated consumer wants, and this, we feel, takes the place of their largely aimless precontact life of wanton pleasure-seeking or doggedly primitive modes of subsistence. We instruct them in habits of industry and teach them how to appreciate what were formerly regarded as useful items but now, partly by virtue of their production beyond the level of immediate need, a subspecies of art. We think of these peoples as minor purveyors of domestic items that bear the bittersweet mark of labor-intensive handicraft production that we both fondly identify with our own origins and repudiate as the antithesis of modernity.

Nevertheless, handicraft production is excluded from high art. We rigidly disallow to preindustrial groups the creatively abstract "freedom of spirit" we hold necessary to the sophisticated imaginings and refined feelings that we define as underlying art. Indians may be visionaries, but they have primitive visions. They are too innocent of the rack of civilization; that is what we mean by "primitive."

Art talk and craft talk don't coincide, and neither do their markets. Roger Fry, in "The Artist's Vision" (1919), apologized for artists' fondness for certain cheap Victorian household items, explaining that they figured *in the mysterious generation of high art but were not to be taken up by persons of refined taste, the art public. By modernist doctrine, artists may cherish coarse artifacts, but such communion is justified only by the transmutation of base material in the crucible of genius. The contact between artists and craftsmen (among these Zapotecs, weaving is done by men), although accomplished through intermediaries who took the sketches to Teotitlan del Valle, was felt to have had a vaguely spiritual outcome. These days one can hardly admit to contact with native peoples without claiming some enlightenment. A knowledge of rug making, however, was not thought necessary for the artists.

Two weavers, said to be interested in art, were allowed to execute their own designs for the show, but no ordinary Zapotec rugs were shown. The weavers were all paid a fixed sum; I was told it was $1,000 per rug, which is unlikely—the rugs were priced from $800 to about $5,000, with some over, and most went for a couple of thousand. No one would say what the promoters and artists made from a sale. Many rugs had been sold before the show opened, and the show was considered by many people to be an excuse to hold a great party attended by wealthy Texans, music-industry people, and Los Angeles art people.

Reprise: Step One, marriage of Zapotec knowhow with the art-smarts of the L.A.-Venice boys Joe Goode, Ed Ruscha, Laddie John Dill, Tom Wudl, Peter Alexander, Billy AI Bengston, Larry Bell, Kenny Price, and others, and numerous Texans, among whom the only name I recognized was that of Bob Wade. Step Two, moving the goods. The show announcement's, in their fresh-faced piety, gave equal billing to the Zapotecs (as "Zapotec indians," not by name); even more piously, the wall labels named the weavers—Celso Gutierrez, Doroteo Martinez and others—right along with the artists. The price list, with no-frills business sense, named only the artists. The poster, by Ron Cooper, added another element: Imagine blue cutesy-cactus lettering superimposed on a downward-angled photo in sepia of a naked woman (Caucasian) bent over backward, with pubicircgion elevatcd, on a "traditional" Zapotec rug. She's in the *chakrasana*, or wheel pose, of yoga; aren't all Indian cultures', East or West, the same? Shall we take her as the muse of Western art infusing Zapotec rug making with a suitably spiritualized Western sensibility? She's not naked, she's doing yoga; those aren't rugs, they're a fusion of art and craft. Or shall we say that the poster coyly conjoins what is absent from the show—white-woman sexuality and traditional rugs? Or that it is easy to yoke two forms of objectification, of women and of native peoples, in the interest of sales?

Del Mar, California

NOTES

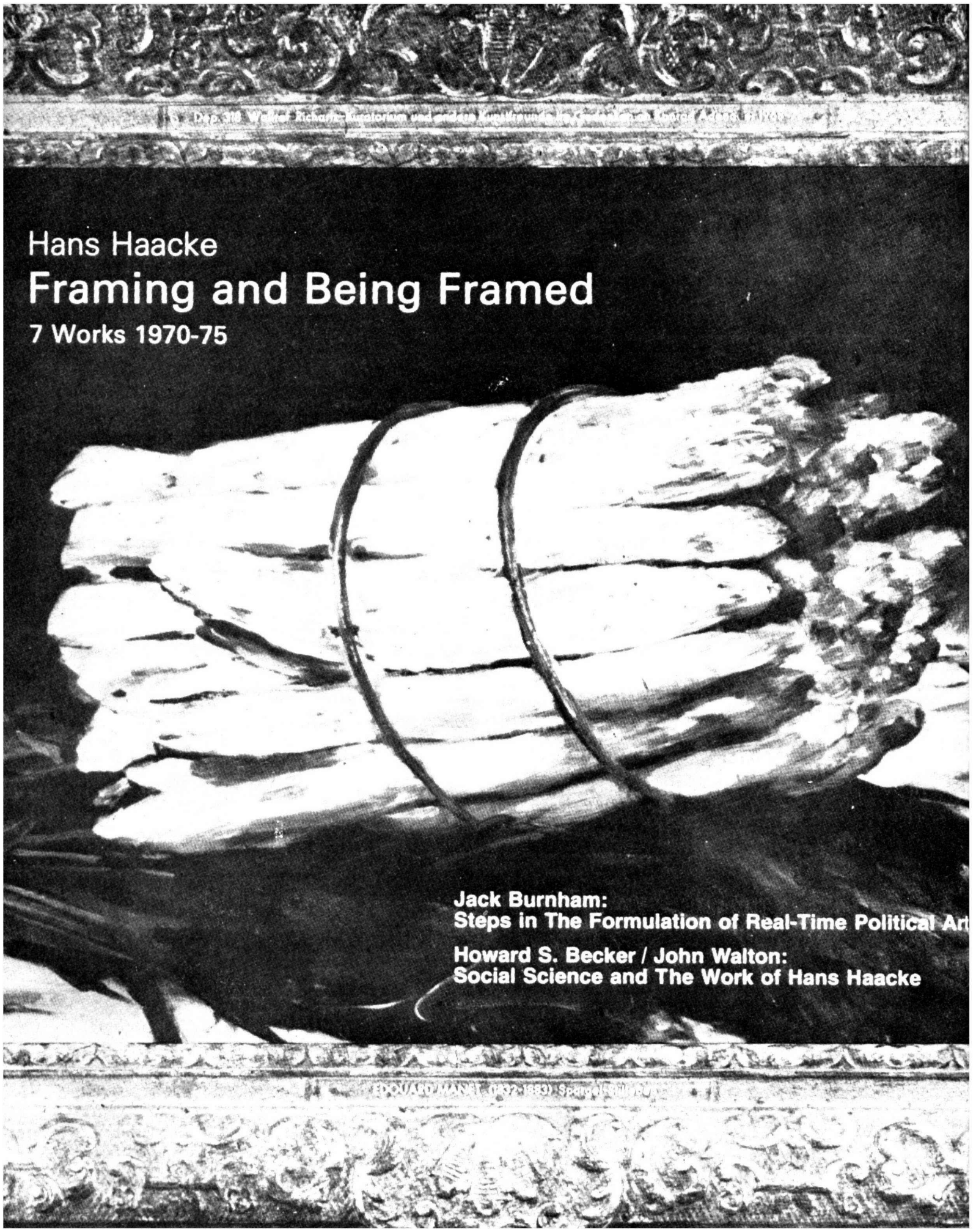
1. The rugs were as interesting as one feels rugs to be; it's almost too good to be true that the most interesting was done by Arnulfo Mendoza, said to be a young Zapotec who has formally studied art. He alone used shading, rather delicate gradations of tones, particularly in a "surrealist" sort of chase scene with rabbits, birds, and little hillocks. It helps to know the capabilities of the medium.

2. There seemed to be a split between "designers" and "artists," with most of the former being Texans and the latter, Californians. Some of the rugs: Sandy Sussman's translated a photo of a hook and its shadow into a gray-on-natural rug; Ruscha's said "to welcome you" in Sahara-Inn-type lettering; Bengston's was an abstract sandwiching of red, green, and blue units with a border of "hecho en Mexico"; Irina Auerkieff (not on price list) and Peter Alexander did a starry night sky with silver threads on black; Tom Wudl did a Kandinsky; Jim Ganzer did home plate; Bob Wade arranged Texas icons: snake, revolver, oil well, etc. Kenny Price's were both racist and sexist. Two of his four showed a large-eyed, large-lipped, black-haired suggestion of a Mexican pinup in split-beaver pose nervously outlined in black. One other said, "Mexican Arts" and had abutting patches of high-key color reminiscent of a curio-shop plastic sign, and one showed a sombreroed form huddled on a street with cacti. The implication that these quoted cheap Mexican border art only raises the question of the culpability of Pop in general.

3. Hermino Martinez, essentially the head weaver, did five rugs, two of "which were Picasso's *Three Musicians* and *Guernica*. Neither had sold by the next-to-Iast day; perhaps Pop sells only in a context that excludes indians giving back Western high art on rugs.

4. Three rugs were designed by Joni Mitchell. There are music-world connections among the backers.

5. Why were rugs being sold in the gallery of an art school?



Hans Haacke

Framing and Being Framed

7 Works 1970-75

Jack Burnham:
Steps in The Formulation of Real-Time Political Art

Howard S. Becker / John Walton:
Social Science and The Work of Hans Haacke

REVIEW

FRAMING AND BEING FRAMED—OR, ARE WE GOING TO LET BARBARA ROSE GET AWAY WITH "DIALECTITCS" THIS YEAR?

MEL RAMSDEN

This is a review—it's not an art 'lover's' review—of *Hans Haacke-Framing and being Framed;* 7 *Works 1970-75*, containing(actually helpful) contributions from Jack Burnham ("Steps in the Formulation of Real-Time Political Art") and Howard Becker-John Walton ("Social Science and the Work of Hans Haacke")—published by the Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and New York University Press.

By now the news must have gotten around: Hans Haacke is a "political artist". If we didn't already know this, lack The-Structure-of-Art Burnham's essay rams the theme down our throats: Hans is a talented-but-indignant-Kunstler-exposing-petty-bureaucrats-with-sociological-systems-analysis. According to Becker and Walton's essay, Haacke's materials seem to imply, when taken together, this theory: "The contemporary art world [is] one organized around an endemic conflict between the interests of those who produce the art and the broader public which supports them ideologically, on the one hand, and the interests of the much smaller group of wealthy people and politicians who provide the big money supporting the system. Working through such intermediate institutional functionaries as museum directors, those who control the system act in various ways to control the output of artists and particularly to diminish and mute the political content of their work".[1]

In other words, the intellectual and cultural worker is today also a slave to the profit system—not anywhere near as 'miserable' as certain of the industrial proletariat perhaps, but sharing with them a powerless role in relation to production, one clearly ratifying the domination of the bourgeois ruling-class.

I wanted to begin this review by getting this out of the way, to me the patently true but turgid theme of a lot of New-Left Radical Kunst (a kind of smug security in *being in possession* of what's wrong—i.e., that the whole world's up shit creek and capitalism's to

blame). Obviously, Haacke's somewhat laborious "sociology" is not required to 'discover' this. That is, if Haacke's work is there to remind left-liberals of what left-liberals know already and to tease the rich when the rich *love* to be teased then it isn't "Real-Time" at all but rather more adventuristic and titillating grist for the art-mill.

But then that may not be all there is to what Haacke does. What makes a person's work political—*yeecchhh* or, perhaps, activist, isn't subject-matter or theme—obviously. If it were merely a matter of theme then counter-culture spectacles, bourgeois temper-tantrums, Social Realism and academic-rational critiques might help—they don't. No, it is the "enemies in the minds of the people"—in *our own minds* insofar as *we* are the people—which must be fought. And not fought by 'depictions' of our miseries and powerlessness, but through a conscientious grip on the inevitable march of historical reality. Bourgeois ideology and the capitalist economic base must be fought; not just the overt but the covert forms of manipulation, those saturating particularly the 'commonsense' of society itself. Some of these are individualism, static categorization, specialization and fragmcntation, abstraction, bourgeois legality, self-interest, consumerism. All of these simultaneously work to obscure their own existence, thus disguising themselves as nature. In short, activism, is nothing if it is short of *epistemological activism*.

The above doesn't sound much like stern-Deutsch-Hans does it? Hans who won't let himself be photographed and is so—well—obsessive about guarding his "neutrality" and "anonimity". He never uses "polemics" or "political slogans" and has us believe this is "cunning" (actually, as Becker and Walton point out, his plain ol' facts approach conceals a distinct Ieftish bias).[2] Hc also seems to believe that if you "Iet the facts speak for themselves" then such facts will survive—influentially. This is simply not true. It isn't tree because dominant bourgeois consciousness isn't some merely contingent or imposed set of instructions which oppositional "facts" can dispose of. Not at all. There is a sense in which facts may be seen as 'effects' but not 'causes'. Bourgeois consciousness is so deep and so saturated that it simply constitutes 'reality' for most of us—a massive corpus of learning and responding that a few oppositional 'facts' won't provide the key to changing.

But this reminds me of what is central, not to Haacke's 'pieces', but to his work *as practice*. Whenever I think of his MOMA or Weber Polls, *On Social Grease* or the provenances, I first of all want to *complain*. Here is a list of some of my complaints: Haacke has a penchant for causal sociological 'explanations', going 'back' only to come 'forward' to tell us something we already know.[3] He assumes (apparently) that these analyses' a la sociology bother the ruling-class (they do bother their lackeys and sometimes provoke them into hysterically demonstrating their real class alliances). He always seems to ask us to see things 'at a distance and with detachment (an act of accomodation to ruling-class 'rationality'—one conveniently removing thc subject-person as a source of power). Further, there is a lack of real *oppositional* content in his work. It seems to snub the rich without *despising* and *challenging* the rich. (Does his work thus paradoxically and through its dissent 'prove' the system works, that freedom *is*" possible? Is 'dissent' essential to the liberal superstructure, often diffusing more challenging critique?) The work sometimes reminds me of counter-culture, that is, it exists *in the same space as the* institutions it apparently is fighting. It is *negative* to the institutions, bu*t in the same space*. Thus he not only serves the institutions veneer of 'freedom', he also disappears if the institutions disappear.[4] The lack of an *oppositional* practice—of an alternative that is *threatening* rather than merely incorporable—the lack, that is, of an alternative that is of a *higher logical type* than that which he is apparently opposing—could be because of the seeming disregard of the coming to power, 'through class-conflict, of a new class. And finally, why does he bother to 'reveal' to us predominantly Ieft-liberal audience that they do indeed have—*yes*—left-liberal thoughts!

These are not all of my complaints, though they are a sampling. Similar complaints belong also to other work (including Art & Language). However, my purpose is to suggest this: complaining is, or should be, *precise-*

ly the point! It is *here* that the irresolutions, the stress points, the potential gaps in 'rational' capitalist consciousness occur. It is just *here*, if anywhere, that Haacke's work 'succeeds'. But if it 'succeeds' it 'succeeds' *as practice. Practice* implies conceptual analysis linked with application of objective conditions of action and a specific subjective element (not only technical but 'moral'). It implies the anticipation of ends, with all that anticipation contains of risk, of responsible and real historical initiative, calls forth decisions, calls forth passionate subjective appropriation. Thus, if Haacke's work 'succeeds', then practice is not just *his* as a 'creative artist' but belongs to *all people who view the work.* Haacke's work does not 'succeed' insofar as it can be correctly or profitably *consumed.*[5] It does not succeed as 'an object of experience'.

Complaints must be analysed, decided upon, though not necessarily 'resolved'. Resolving a complain in this case probably means accommodating it within the rational world-view of capitalist consciousness. To complain is to become (perhaps) self-reflexively aware of one's *own* condition. This is dialectical—I have to ask what are the socio-economic-aesthetic conditions of this work *as I understand them.* (Can you think of other artists whose names are greeted mainly by complaints?) The assumption that we simply consume works of art is a basic theoretical position of reactionary art-criticism and a striking structural-ideological means of manipulation. It is this which the ruling-class has predicated its rationalization of culture upon.

Jack Burnham reminds us of the Guggenheim cancellation. Haacke wanted the Guggenheim to show his tracings of ownerships of Lower East Side ghetto properties, cross-indexing names of relatives, business associates and dummy corporations—with each property described by a photo of the site, maps, assessed value, etc. Thomas Messer ('gentleman's gentleman' and not incidently Director of the Guggenheim Museum) cancelled the exhibition—as Burnham reminds us—on the grounds that it might engender legal action by the real estate operator and may violate the political "neutrality" of the Guggenheim's charter as a public educational institution. Messer wrote a guest editorial for *Arts Magazine*[6] making the point "that the Guggenheim confrontation would never have taken place if they had relied upon the traditional system of selecting finished objects instead of relying on artist's proposals, 'the improvisational working mode'." In other words—as Burnham reminds us—here is the lesson: "censorship remains undetected when a museum makes its decisions on completed art before announcing a public commitment to the artist".[7]

In considering Haacke's work 'as practice', there is no reason not to credit him for provoking an incident in which the lackey-bureaucrat upholds ruling-class control by an appeal to 'tradition'. It gives us a concrete demonstration (if not new insight into) bureaucratic-entrepreneurial hegemony. It is not over-deterministic or at all paranoiac to see the expectation that art be "selected from finished objects" of consumption as mediated by the territorial profit demands of the ruling-class. This is what Messer regrets 'losing' when his decisions have to be made in the open. Like all bourgeois politicians, he cherishes back-room secrecy and covert control. Neither is it at all paranoiac or at all conspiratorial to suggest that the profit system mediates the entrepreneurial half-life of art-critics, for it is undeniable that it is criticism which provides the major contact with the market. Art-criticism has relied to an enormous extent on a theoretical system of acquiring the right taste in order that an object be correctly or profitably consumed. It is not incidental that the work of art as isolated object just happens to very conveniently determine the passivity of a critic's public. For art becomes a segregated world, a world of genius, stars, super-stars (or, to quote from the television advertisement for New York's Metropolitan Museum, "beautiful people"), special people no doubt, makers of history·and culture. For this world strongly implies that real history and real culture is made only by special people in and for segregated museums, made by people with fundamental and even 'magical' endowments. For the unfortunately passive and 'uncreative' masses,art is promoted and sold as an object of alienated infatuation. You can even fall in love with art and so become

'an art lover'. But it is a fragmentary affair unfortunately, a minor-adjustment empirical 'experience' and never a liberating-transformational act. The production of a work of art AND the reception *(reception*—see how 'natural' it is to use a passive term) of a work of art must be active, a question of practice, and never just a matter of 'acquiring the right taste' in order to 'consume the right things.'

It is consistant with the perception of many militants that it is capitalism's highly complex covert internal structures which must be fought—culturally, economically and politically. Part of this covert internal structure is the way (e.g.,) entrepreneurs *in the name of profit* (if you think about it) alienate art as an 'object of consumption'. Precisely *this* alienation, which is claimed as natural, is part of the 'hidden' manipulation of consciousness. This must be fought, and for it to be fought we must *name* and *know* the enemy.

I think the book itself is well thought out. Hans Haacke and Kaspar Koenig did a tidy job. Beckcr and Walton's essay, for example, is not your run-of-the-mill promotional sychophancy nor the listen-you-hoypolloy-you're-in-the-presence-of-a-genius-and-I-bear-his-message mystification. They do a certain amount of mildish complaining about Haacke but to me it seems they treat the work as if it exists in a non-segregated world. (For all their "free-floating" apparent lack of depth, Haacke's work—the Polls (say) or *On Social Grease*, seem [perhaps contingently] to annex traditional 'appreciative' criticism. Traditional appreciative criticism requires a certain discrete 'distance'—a distance which just renders Haacke's results meaningless. On the other hand, what Haacke's work seems to imply is that the critic become a participant in the work itself and hence cease to be 'a critic' as we understand it traditionally. The annexing of the critic and the eluding of the entrepreneur will be a result of socialist and historically progressive new work.)

Beckcr and Walton give us several indications as to why art is maintained as an object of consumption, why society is fragmented, thingified, alienate. Here is an example, a revealing one it seems to me: "The subjects of power structure studies can ignore the books written about them because those books never impinge upon or occur as events in the worlds they move in. They might find it in bad taste to find their corporate directorships discussed in detail but thcey need not listen to such discussions or have their noses rubbed in their ability to prevent the discussions from taking place. Academic research appears in esoteric professional journals, or in papers read at meetings attended by disciplinary colleagues. An occasional finding achieves a momentary publicity in the daily press but no more than that. Academic social science is sufficiently segregated from the worlds it describes, by virtue of its conventional practice with respect to the publication and dissemination of results, that scientists do not have the means to offer such provocations as Haacke does".[8]

This quote leaves no doubt that the segregation, the alienation, the commodification, with which museums treat art, *is in order to make it academic* (like sociology) *and remove potential activism.* The ruling-class, through their numerous culture-rationalizers, windbags, and other parasites, will with pleasure give militants their own Departments, their own niche, their own self-management for their own Study Courses, so long as they can avoid confrontations with the facts of their own hegemony (and not coincidently make huge profits from proliferation of discrete 'knowledge industries'). Militancy is being aware historically and class-antagonistic and not puristic or moralistically utopian. The power of the system is a power to fragment (make irrelevant) on the one hand and incorporate (still make irrelevant) on the other. Thus the militant's work is a constant flurry of trouble-making, disguises, advances, false trails, retreats, compromises and contradictions *plus* the recognition that he or she is (paradoxically) in the service of perverse bourgeois culture. Becker and Walton seem to regard Haacke's work as militant since it impinges on the world in which Haacke himself opceates and makes a living. I am not so convinced, if only because many of his provocations appear to often echo too harmlessly around the art world. That is, militancy is more than being a "socially concerned artist"

making your living from reminding the art-world that it is a "system". Militancy is not sectional. It is being a producer at grips with the Realpolitik of historico-material reality and, above all, it is *the necessity of penetrating the superstructural demands of the militant non-proletariat with the economic and living social demands of the world revolutionary movements.*

I wonder if Haacke is *really* interested in this since one of my major complaints is the apparent absence of class-consciousness in what he does? I wonder if free-floating classless 'sociology' is any more "cunning" than guerilla rhetoric? And the absence of *class* puzzles me even more since otherwise Haacke seems to treat socialism as a historian and not as a fragmented moralist treating the world in terms of 'good: and 'evil'. (Using 'preferences in ethics' as a means of finding a free oasis in the desert of alienation is, unfortunately, a tendency of certain writers in *The Fox.)*

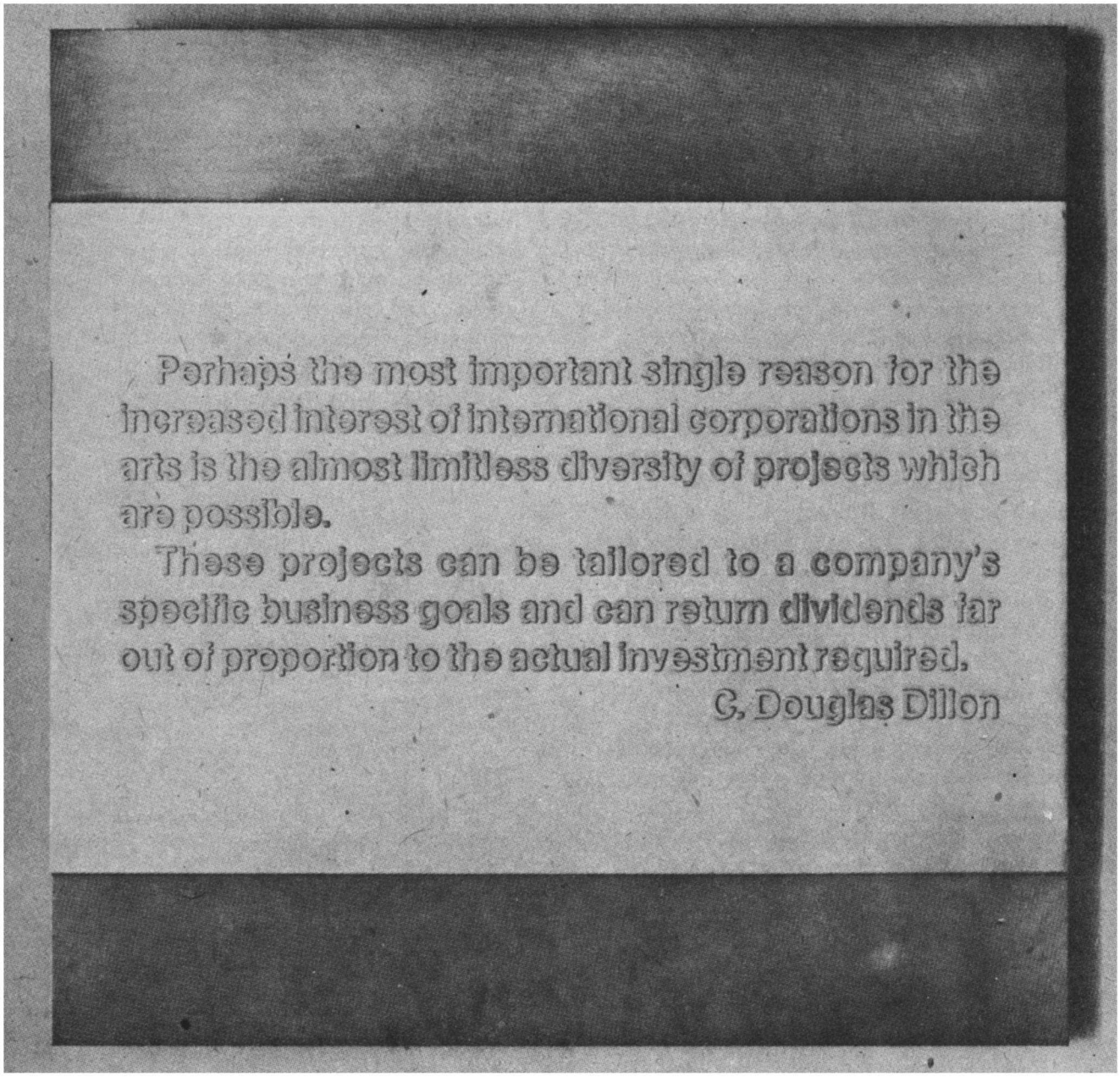
Today, as capitalism monopolizes more and more industries for profit, many of the antagonisms between exploiter and exploited exist superstructurally-ideologically as well as with the base or primary economic needs. Those who discern the ultimate consequences of this profit expansion must not simply turn to 'making art for the people'. Cultural militancy is no Salvation Army project. It is not a demand to patronizingly 'help the people' but rather that people 'help themselves', and this first means removing 'creativity' as the segregated domain of a few special people—in order that it be subject to the dictatorship of *all* working people.

So, in the light of this, consider again the list of complaints made above. Do these complaints make us aware of *our own circumstances?* Does Hans Haacke's work really skirt, being mere nifty little political art consumables? Does this work instead *make us into the existing subject*—not abstractly, but identifying *us* as the source of power? Because this to me is the real point: that the work should be 'mad' enough to fuck up bourgeois reality and cause trouble for the system of Imperialism—trouble-making which will be mere spectacle unless it is learnt and based on the concrete discernment of class antagonisms.

New York, New York

NOTES

1. Walton and Becker, page 149.
2. Walton and Becker, page 147-8.
3. See F. Newman, *Power and Authority: the Inside View of The Class Struggle*, Centers for Change Inc., 1974.
4. See Anthony Wilden, "The Scientific Discourse: Knowledge as a Commodity" in *Mayday*, Volume I, Number I, 1975.
5. For an "expensive" marxist's account of critical theory as consumption-guide vs. critical theory as practice (if that's possible) see Raymond William's "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Critical Theory", *NLR*, Nov-Dec, 1973.
6. *Arts Magazine*, June 1971.
7. Burnham, page 138.
8. Becker and Walton, page 151.

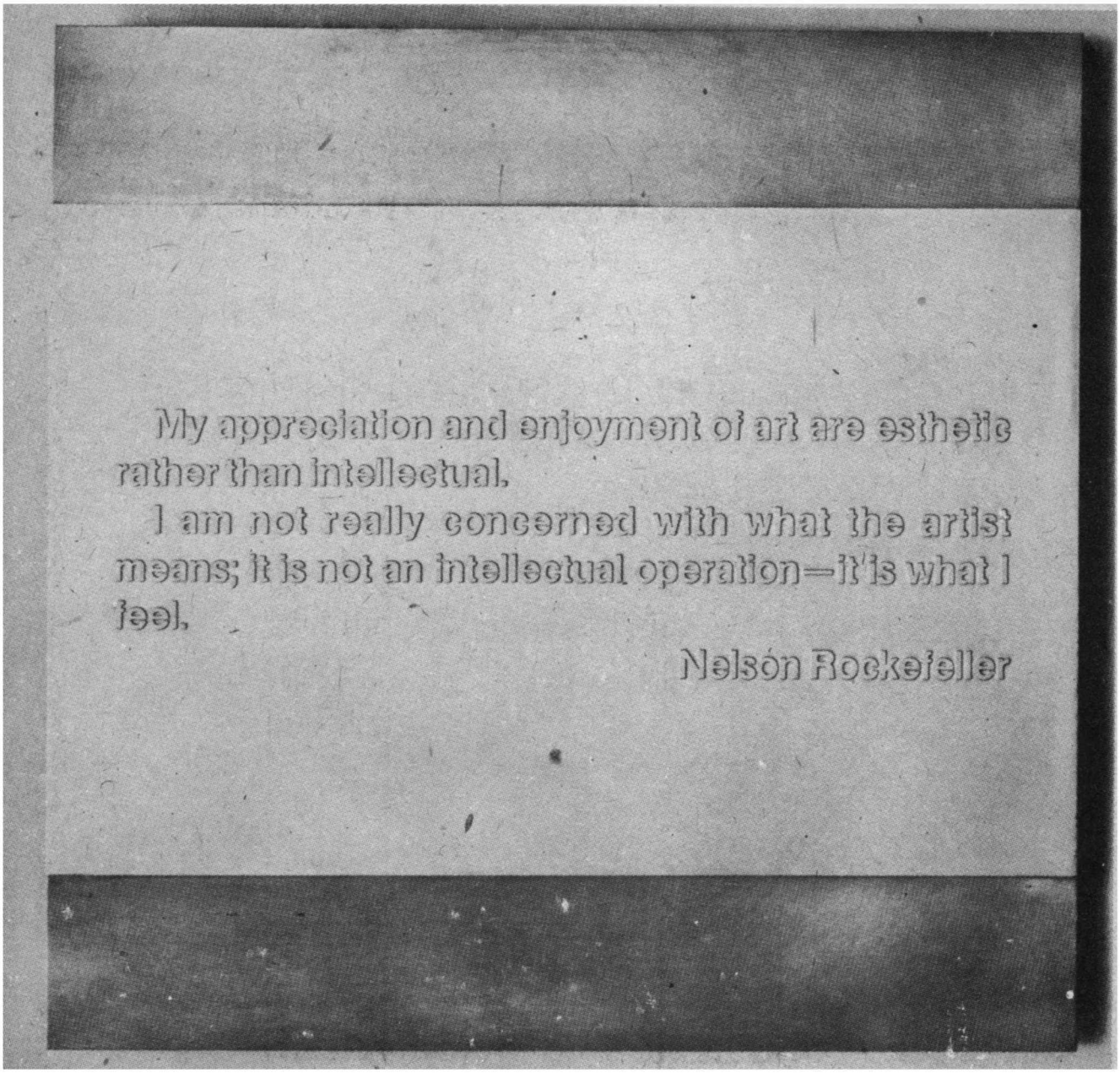

Perhaps the most important single reason for the increased interest of international corporations in the arts is the almost limitless diversity of projects which are possible.
These projects can be tailored to a company's specific business goals and can return dividends far out of proportion to the actual investment required.
C. Douglas Dillon

C. Douglas Dillon

Metropolitan Museum, President
Business Committee for the Arts, Co-founder, first Chairman
Rockefeller Foundation, Chairman
Brookings Institution, Chairman

U.S. & Foreign Securities Corp., Chairman
Dillon, Read & Co., Chairman of Exec. Com., Director

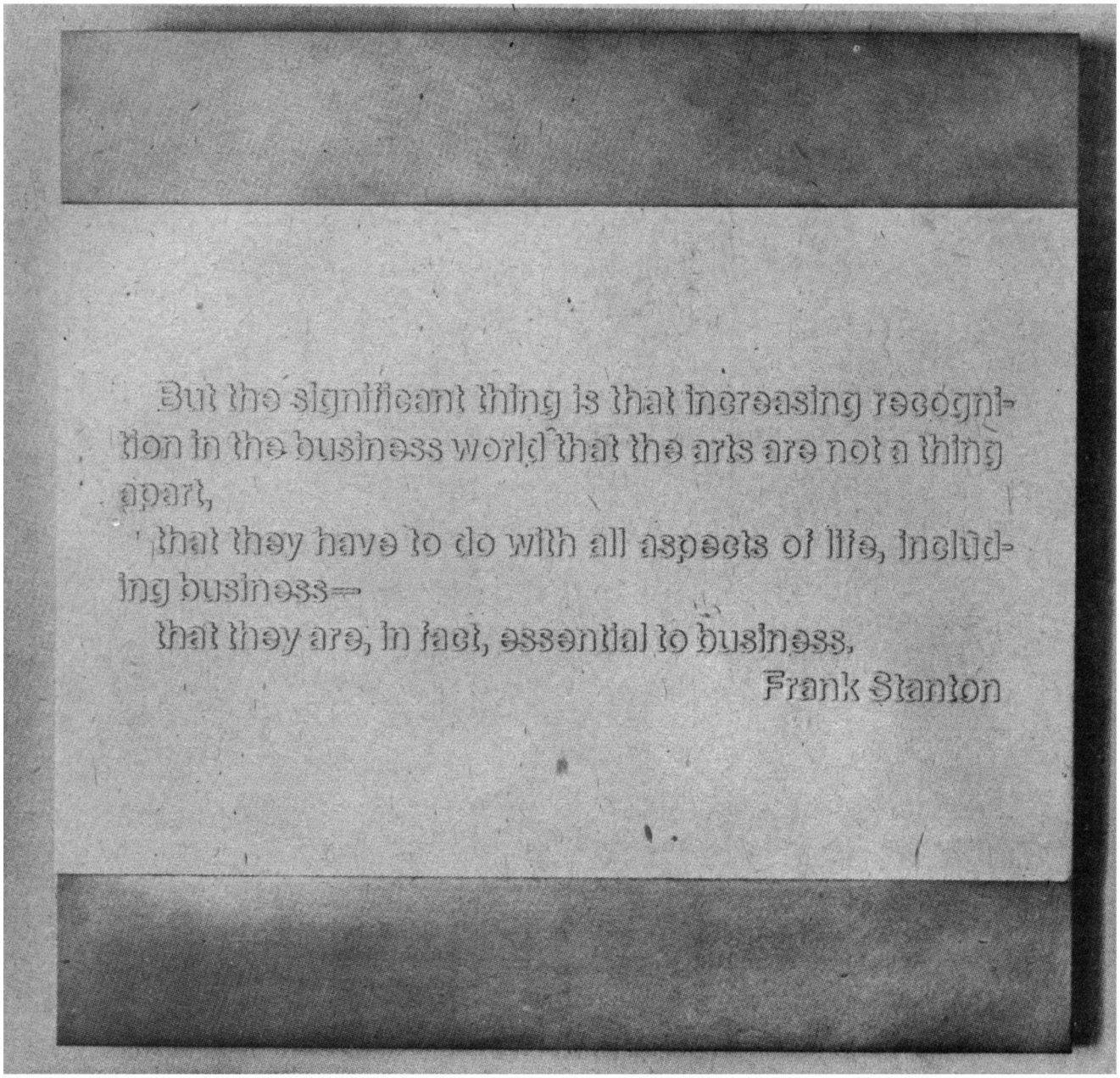
Quoted from C. Douglas Dillion "Cross-Cultural Communication Through the Arts", in *Columbia Journal of World Business,* Columbia University, New York, Sept./Oct. 1971.


My appreciation and enjoyment of art are esthetic rather than intellectual.
I am not really concerned with what the artist means; it is not an intellectual operation—it is what I feel.
Nelson Rockefeller

Nelson Rockefeller

Museum of Modern Art, Trustee
Vice President of the United States of America

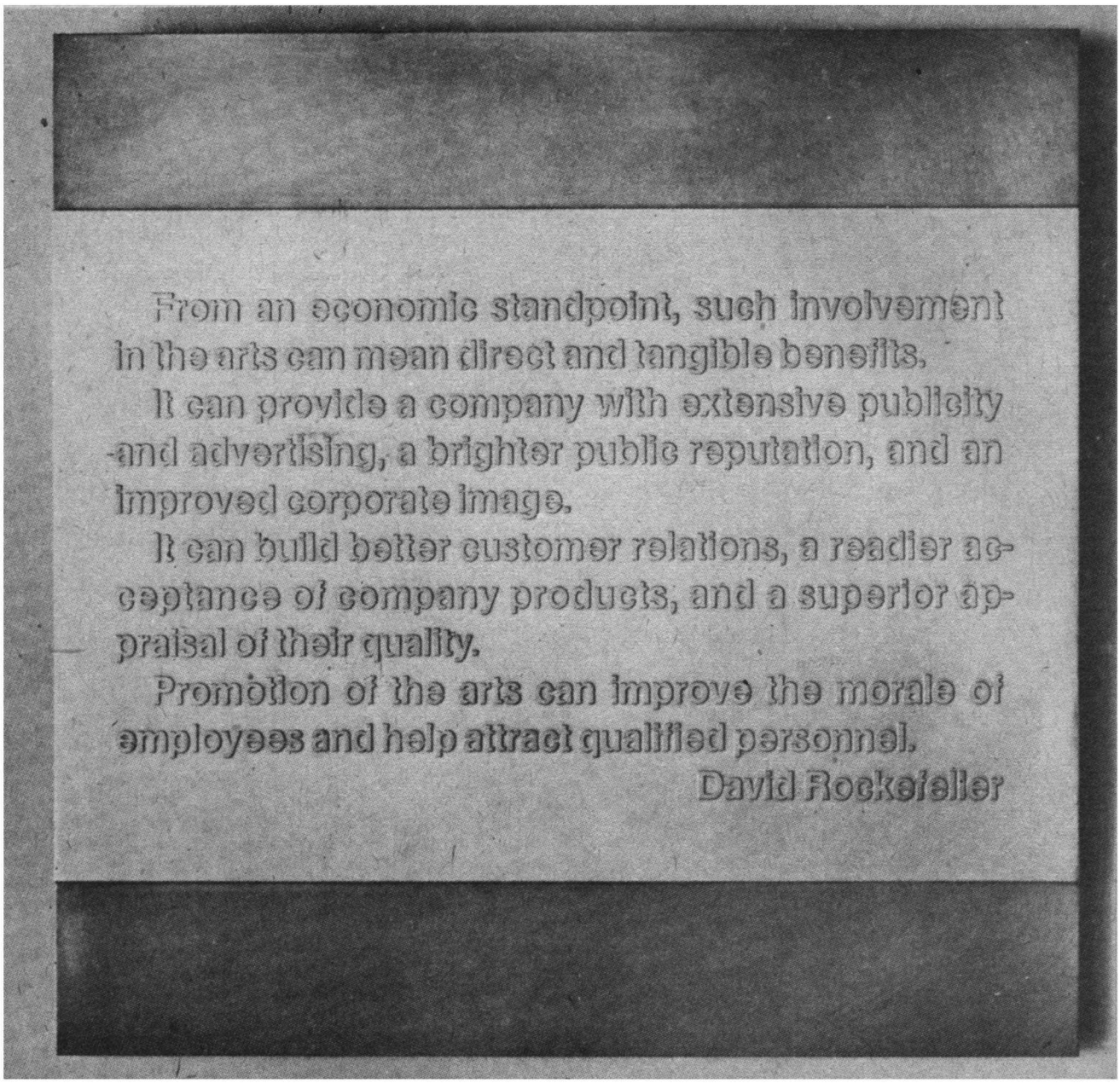
Quoted from report by Grace Glueck, *The New York Times,* May 1, 1969, page 50.


But the significant thing is that increasing recognition in the business world that the arts are not a thing apart,
that they have to do with all aspects of life, including business—
that they are, in fact, essential to business.
Frank Stanton

Frank Stanton

American Crafts Council, Trustee
Business Committee for the Arts, Chairman
Carnegie Institution, Washington D.C., Trustee
Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Director
Rockefeller Foundation, Trustee
Atlantic Richfield Co., Director
American Electric Power Co., Inc., Director, Member Exec. Com.
CBS Inc., Vice Chairman, Director
Diebold Venture Capital Corp., Director
New Perspective Fund, Director
New York Life Insurance Co., Director, Member Exec. Com.
Pan American World Airways, Inc., Director, Member Exec. Com.
Rand Corporation, Trustee
Roper Public Opinion Research Center, Director

Quoted from Frank Stanton "The Arts—A Challenge to Business", speech to 25th Anniversary Public Relations Conference of Public Relations Society of American and Canadian Public Relations Society, Detroit, Nov. 12, 1972.

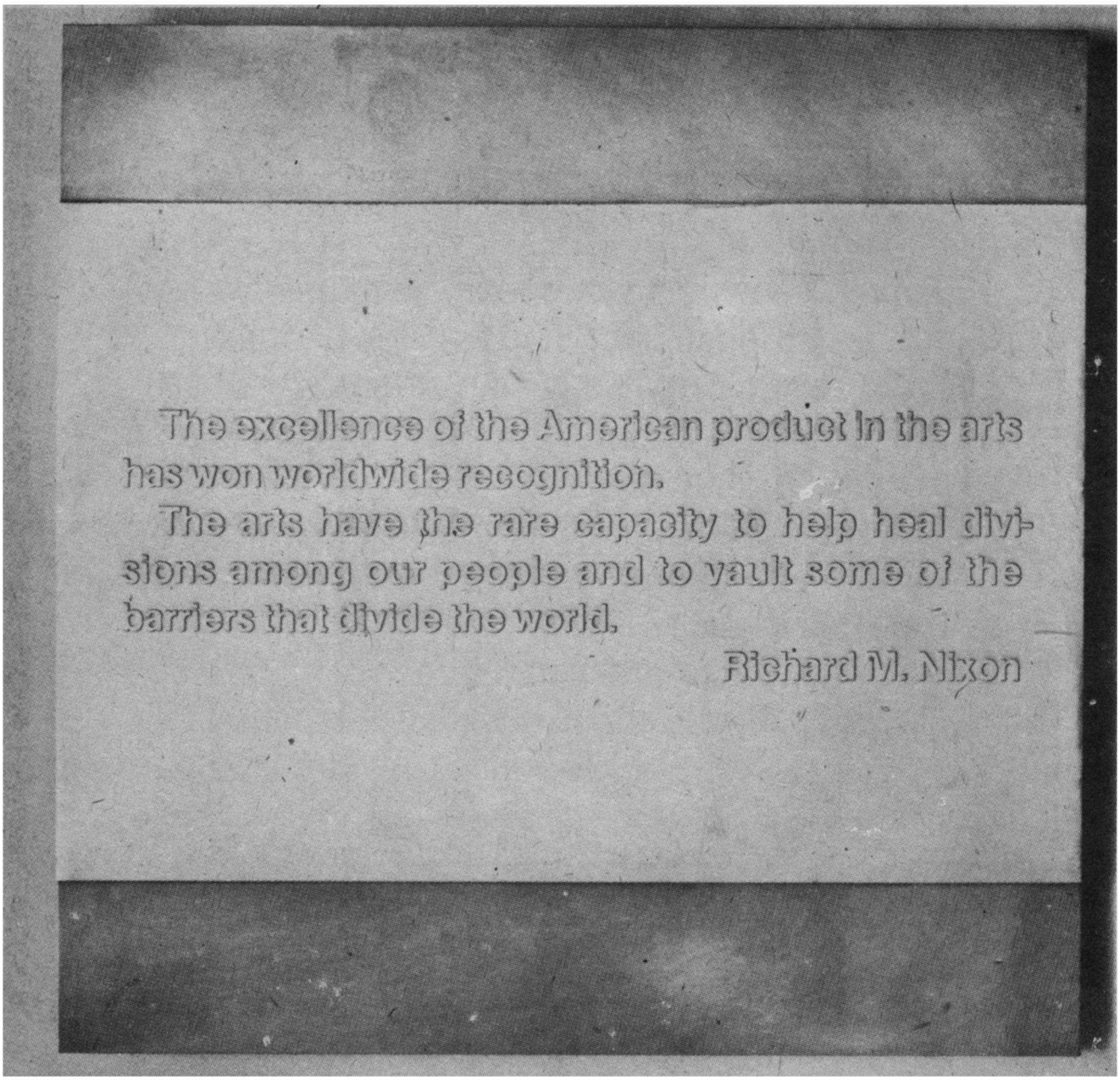

From an economic standpoint, such involvement in the arts can mean direct and tangible benefits.
It can provide a company with extensive publicity and advertising, a brighter public reputation, and an improved corporate image.
It can build better customer relations, a readier acceptance of company products, and a superior appraisal of their quality.
Promotion of the arts can improve the morale of employees and help attract qualified personnel.
David Rockefeller

David Rockefeller

Museum of Modern Art, Vice Chairman
Business Committee for the Arts, Co-founder and Director

Chase Manhattan Bank Corp., Chairman, Chief Exec. Officer

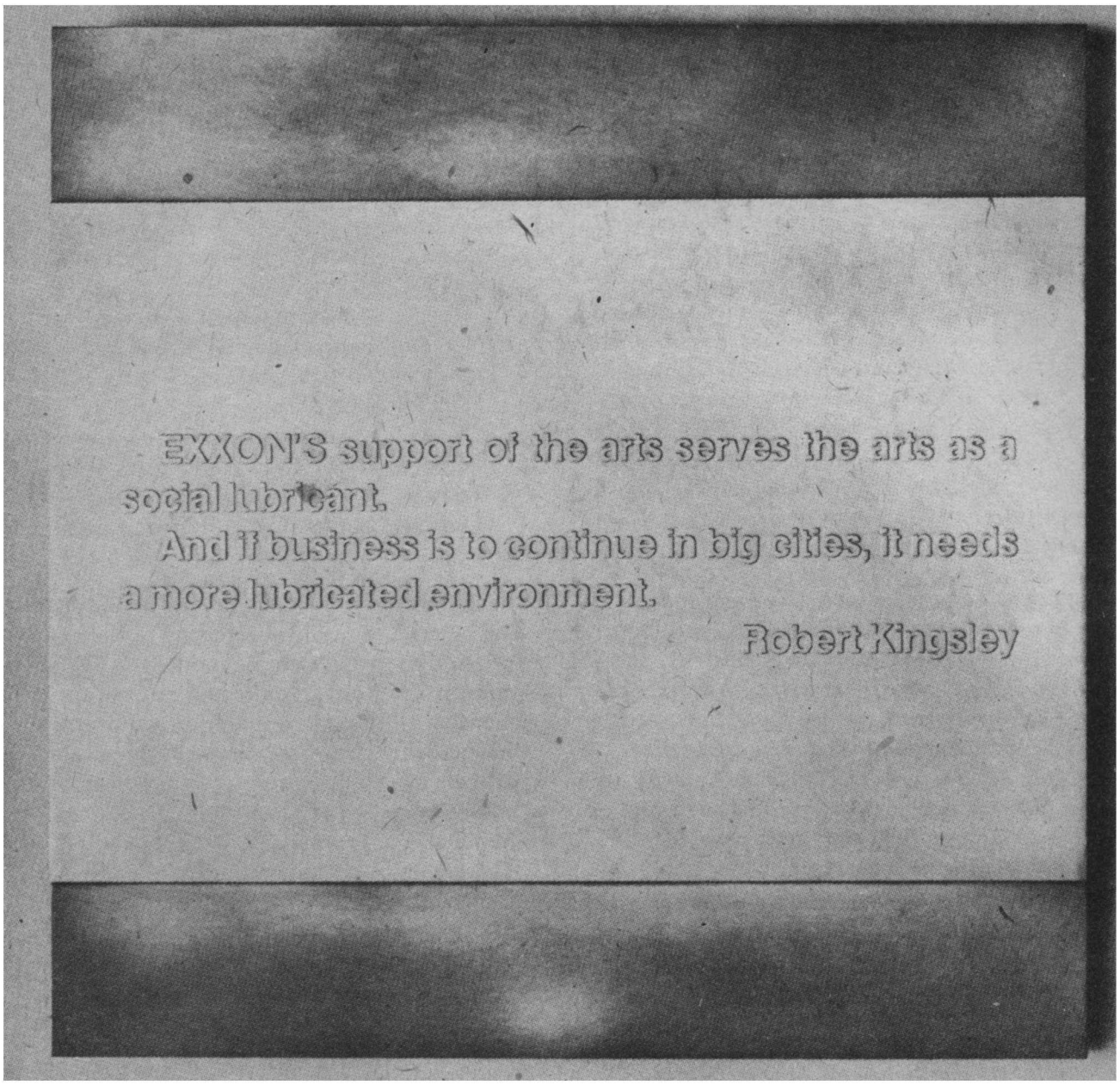
Quoted from David Rockefeller "Culture and the Corporation's Support of the Arts", speech to National Industrial Conference Board, Sept. 20, 1966.


The excellence of the American product in the arts has won worldwide recognition.
The arts have the rare capacity to help heal divisions among our people and to vault some of the barriers that divide the world.
Richard M. Nixon

Richard M. Nixon

President of the United States 1968-74 (resigned)

Quoted from address to Congress in support of the National Endowment for the Arts, in *The Wall Street Journal,* Jan. 2, 1970, page 6.


EXXON'S support of the arts serves the arts as a social lubricant.
And if business is to continue in big cities, it needs a more lubricated environment.
Robert Kingsley

Robert Kingsley

Manager of Urban Affairs in
Department of Public Affairs, Exxon Corp., New York
President, Arts and Business Council, New York

Quoted in Marylin Bender "Business Aids the Arts . . . And Itself",
The New York Times, Oct. 20, 1974, section III, page 1.

HAVING-YOUR-HEART-IN THE-RIGHT-PLACE IS NOT MAKING HISTORY

ART & LANGUAGE, UK

'Let us not cite history. Our logic and time is new. I see no collective ideals, nothing outside personal truth to identify with …

'By choice I identify myself with working men. I belong by craft yet my subject of aesthetics introduces a breach. I suppose that is because I believe in a workingman's society in the future and ill that society I hope to find a place. In this society I find little place to identify myself economically ….

'I have strong social feelings but propaganda is not necessarily my fate ….

'The most important thing to know is who you are and what you stand for and to acknowledge this identity in your time. Concepts in art are your history; there you start.'

(David Smith, an artist with his heart in the right place)

So the artist has no history outside concepts in art, and sees no 'collective ideals', yet he identifies—by *choice—with* working men and 'believes in' a 'workingman's society in the future' in which he'll have a place! Is identification a matter of choice? A-historical identification (i.e. identifying oneself idealistically with a history which one does not believe he can join in making) is mere determinism parading as ideology; 'I f-I-could-I-would-ism '. Smith was just being sentimental about (American) history. The technology of modern art is bourgeois technology. In talking about 'belonging by craft' Smith was referring to the expropriation of manufacturing modes for bourgeois ends. Judd, Morris, Andre and others (not to mention all those new-materials sculptors in England and elsewhere) have continued the process of appropriation (media-topicalisation comes to mean the same thing). One might see Minimal Art, Process Art, Back-to-Nature Art, Jacking-off Art, Doing-things-for-People-Art, Conceptual Art, etc., as sophisticated means of bringing economically intractable commodities (albeit in symbolic forms) into the market place to be 'valued'. Naivety is the 'concerned' artist's best defence in face of the commercialisation of his activity.

Something stronger is needed than the kind of idealism which Smith proclaims, and which his successors have upheld. Belief in the objective conditions for the achieving of socialism is more than a mere matter of faith. When Rosa Luxemburg attacked the opportunist policies of the reformist Eduard Bernstein, she implied that he was guilty of a kind of defection, a stepping aside from the more demanding currents of history. If too many people give up it won't happen. Liberal-reformist projections of history are self-fulfilling prophecies, perhaps because they are essentially normative. We're talking about two kinds—two 'strengths' (c.f. Hintikka) of belief. Belief in a socialist future

is not like saying the creed, more like sticking to your guns. David Smith was just affirming an empty faith (belief). Putting your historical productivity where your mouth is is something different. History is not made by accident, while one's not watching what he's doing. The concept of making history requires purport and purpose. The required purpose is purpose indexed to a defensible projected view of historical reality.

Artists merely 'realising their socialisation' are just people pursuing the pathology of a scandal. Ideological speculation becomes ideological action *only* when it generates class conflict and invests class struggle. ' .... The bourgeoisie maintains itself not only by virtue of force but also by virtue of the lack of class consciousness, the clinging to old habits, the timidity and lack of organization of the masses' (Lenin—'Letters on Tactics'). Artists are members of an essentially bourgeois social section and thus cannot participate in progressive class struggle so long as they retain and promote the 'integrity' of mere intra-social interests. For the artist, ideological intervention must follow upon class analysis and upon ideological penetration of class barriers.

There is a paradox here. One cannot defensibly be 'doing it for *them';* one must be doing it for oneself. The artist/intellectual's interests must be (must have been) transformed into those of tile progressive class, and this transformation must be *(will* be, if it is real transformation) free of complacent 'backwardness'; i.e. it must entail ineradicable change in productive function and class orientation.

Q. 'But who are you doing it for?'

A. I'm not doing it for anyone. I'm just trying to make history. Socialisation must involve historical projectivity, and 'history is classes '. 'Wanting to have it so' can invest (and thus can be) 'making history'; but we have to be talking about more than just good intentions! '

During this century artists have mostly been non-combatants so far as effective class struggle is concerned. This is not to be accounted for by positing some mythical status as classless, or non-aligned, un-ideological beings. 'End-of-ideology' (or '-of-philosophy' or whatever) fixations are themselves tediously ideological and deviously self-serving. It's just that art has been bogged down in social-sectional (merely 'cultural ') interests for so long now that artists have become accustomed to coprophagic forms of lift and are generally unable or unwilling to see out over the edge of the cess-pit towards a *feasible* socialist future For too long now artists have been by definition members of a non-working class. (So long as there has been a proletariat, artists have not been part of it. As the historical identity of the proletariat has developed, so the class-orientation of the artist has been attenuated.) Yet to be defensible now, artists' projects must be projects in and for action along class lines. Under present circumstances, the progressive artists will be those who seek, as however distant a prospect, the dictatorship of culture by the working classes. As a member of a bourgeois social section, the artist can thus only act progressively in the symptomatic and historical paradoxicalness of his own social practice.

One has to have a view of what should happen, in history, and sort ones tasks accordingly. It's no good just carrying-on with good intentions. The progressive intellectual's task , is to generate ideological *conflict.* One's field of feasibly progressive action may be limited to superstructural (ideological) intervention (i.e. One has more potentially useful tasks to perform *as a* member of the intelligentsia than as a foot-soldier who can't shoot straight), but if one's ideological action doesn't include acceptance of the possible practical outcome of ideological conflict, then it is mere monkeying-about.

For instance, the dictatorship of culture by the working class will inevitably involve the progressive artist in persuading some of his social-sectional colleagues to desist, in compelling those who won't be persuaded, and in 'disenfranchising' those who won't be compelled. The 'radical' who does not accept this is just a liberal in Woolf's clothing. 1900-style Transcendental Socialism—the arty idealisation of 'human nature' as involving the potential of universal creativity—just won't do inside a concept of creativity as involving the making of history, and a con-cept of history as involving class struggle.

(How about Joseph Beuys' solution to Ulster's troubles: set up free schools where the proletariat can be distracted by the realisation of their own true creativity? What does he think they're going to do? Sculpting in fat and felt and talking to dead animals don't map easily onto the culture of the Six Counties.)

It's hard to see how social transformation can be achieved without some putting to death. This is not bloodlust but realism. It seems clear that there are those who will never be persuaded that they have no right to be greedy. They are themselves realists of a sort. There can indeed be *no* equity of provision of 'opportunities' where the appropriation of material *and ideological* commodities is concerned, at least certainly not without a transformation so radical as wholly to revise the terms of reference for the concept of opportunity, and it's unlikely that this could be countenanced by those who proclaim the importance of opportunity as presently construed.

While we might not wish to sanction labour camps, we could be sympathetic to a view of them as places where you send those who *won't* be put to work. (And we all have colleagues …) Nor would we fight for freedom of speech if that just meant fighting for the right to express *merely* superstructural (idealistic, asocial) concepts of 'human rights'. We might even see mental hospitals as not inappropriate places of residence for those dissident intellectuals who see dissidence as a mere function of individuality of intuition; i.e. it's more defensible to use them as prisons' for those who are already the prisoners of their own minds than as centers of 'treatment' for the victims of medically irrelevant demarcations imposed by 'liberal' medicine in defence of property and social harmony.

This is the point at which the social democrat gets frightened and sells out in the name of (bourgeois) 'humanism'. 'But I wanted *peaceful* transformation. If it can't be non-violent it won't be what I wanted. And what about my Art? I thought I was fighting for the right to go on doing my thing …. '

Mongewell Oxfordshire

THE WORST OF ALL ALLIES

ART & LANGUAGE, UK

'Educated' common sense is a powerful instrument of class domination. Its practitioners reinforce the bourgeois heritage. 'Who talks to whom, on behalf of whom?' is answered (in advance) on the basis of a single demarcation between 'People' ('The Masses') and the 'free-floating "intelligentsia"'. A condition of historical struggle is the recognition that class conflict *must* result in the supersession of many antecedent motives and aspirations. Class struggle is more than (and that means it is *not)* evolution-cum-debate-in-respect-of-a-socially-universal-Kingdom-of-Ends.

The pseudo-critical apparatus of the ruling-class is capable of complex paranoid mutation. Its arty factions have developed a new ploy: the critic. instead of pretending to be more stupid ('authentic') than he is, now pretends to be less stupid than he is. He's a clever analyst on behalf of the unsophisticated; threatening activity is blandly dismissed as 'gobbledygook', or 'illiterate'. (As a representative of the ruling class, he's a liberal until someone threatens his consumer categories in a serious way.)

Critic-and-teacher-strategies *are* class based: they represent continuity for the ideology of bourgeois harmony. The insecurity of the institutional entrepreneur is hidden in a personalist network which standardizes opportunism. Below we describe a few of the figures whose reactionary ploys are a particular offence to student self-activity and a particular comfort to art-bureaucrats. Those described are microscopic organisms in a microscopic pond. However, the development of antibiotics depends on the isolation of bacterial characteristics.

***(e.g.) Dennis Booth* Member of CNAA Fine Art committee; prone to gout and dizzy spells; reminded of his administrative oversights, he's well-known for his diplomatic illnesses A successful businessman with curious 'art' credentials: he designs fascist-paranoid interiors for the Leeds Permanent Building Society.**

***Richard Cork* Arrivist art critic, as radical as a Rotarian. He's concocted a huge career by saying virtually nothing and worrying no-one in the establishment. Everybody's favourite fifth-former; no doubt a comforting companion for Michael Spens, proprietor of Studio International and a friend of Lady Antonia …**

***Peter de Francia* Professor (sic) of something at R.C.A. who once read a french book; he'd like to dispense lumps of culture to the otherwise disfiguring masses; demanded the resignation of a postgraduate (thesis) student who dared to point-out errors in his inaugural professorial lecture.**

***Richard Hamilton* Vacous bore who can be recognized by the permanent globule of mucous trapped between his lips. He has an unnatural interest in Andrex toilet paper. Has found many apologists: initially, of the love-American type, more recently of the once-read-Roland-Barthes type.**

***Linda Morris* Art critic of *Exchange & Mart;* well known for her address book and**

her eavesdropping. Devoid of credibility, she gets by somehow. An utterly trivial contributor to the most trivial art magazines, she's famous for getting things wrong and hoping that it doesn't matter.

Paul Overy Cumbersome climber up the ladder of art journalism and breast-beating supporter of things as tedious as he is. He thinks you can't be intelligent or clever unless you've been to university. Those members of Art & Language who remember him as an avid but irredeemably dim reader of art books at Cambridge wonder when and how it was that he became so clever an intellectual himself. Was once observed plodding starry-eyed through Venice, hand-in-hand with Angela Flowers Ltd (the famous purveyor of bric a brac to the gentry.)

Robin Plummer A used-car salesman who became interested in art. Now an aging ART EDUCATION careerist. A former official in hundreds of art schools - notoriously, Dean of Art & Design at Lanchester Polytechnic (Coventry) where he was so terrified of certain' students that he'd speak to them only through his solicitor. Author of a meretricious article on art & design research (sic) which he mostly copied from Professor Bruce Archer.

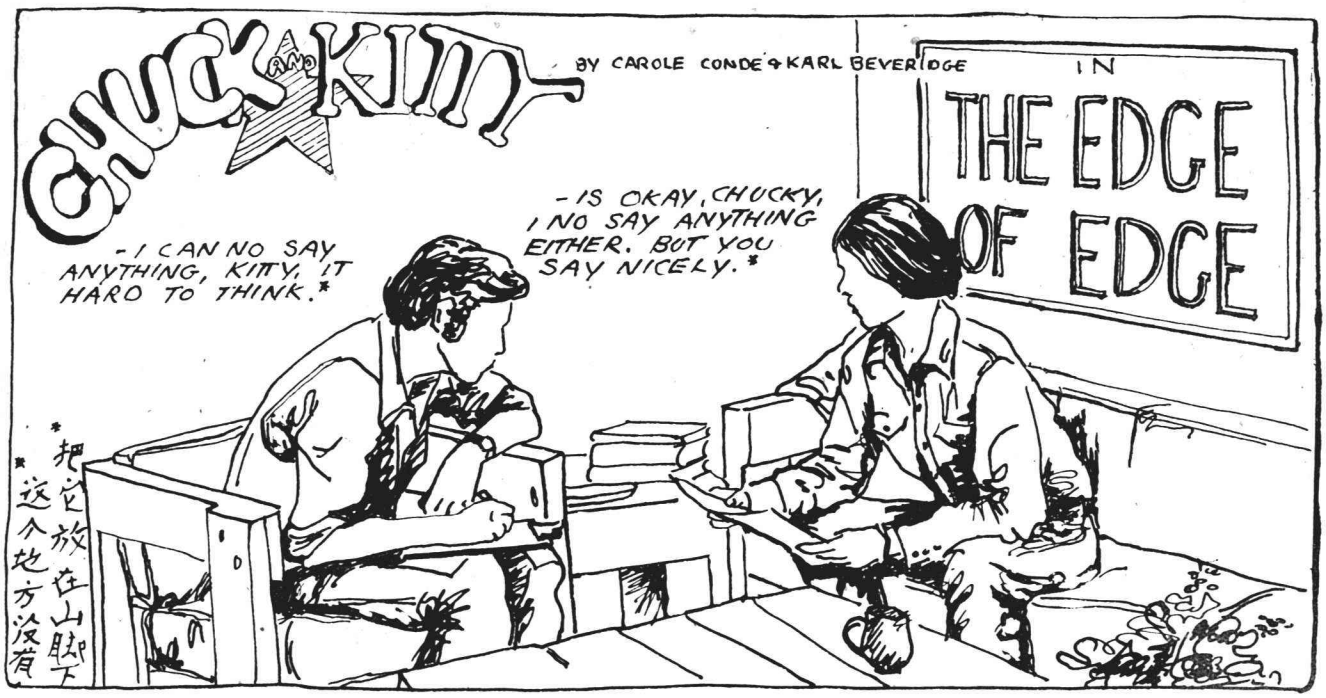
Tony DelRenzio Purports 'progressive' views. These look odd in relation to his history of social pretence. The foreign-sounding name is made up. Notorious as a fellow hanger-about the I.C.A. with other sententious reflections of U.S. imperialism: L. Baldy Alloway, E. Stop-Me-And-Buy-One-Or-I'll-Break-Your-Arm Paolozzi, R. Hamilton (q.v.), R. Banham, the grizzled oaf and consumership celebrant … All halfwits who based their reputations on their efforts to persuade us that Coca-Cola is a social amenity. DelRenzio is a contributor to the journal of palaeontology, *Art* & *Artists*.

Marina Vaizey Dumpy Philistine Art-madame of the *Sunday Times*. Her greatest. contribution to contemporary culture is/was her appearance on a T.V. show depicting (sic) an upper class dinner-party: the participants agonized about their perfectly dreadful difficulty in deciding between comprehensive and public schools for their offspring. The discussion reached the dizziest heights of corpulent inanity. Ms. Vaizey has displayed her searing logic in other quarters: e.g.— describing and rejecting a set of propositions as a) simple, b) too complex to understand— simulanteously and without qualification.

The sample is small; it is by no means selective; if you are at art-school, go-on extending the list until you come-up with someone you know.

Nothing will ensue from participation in the journals and institutions of which the above-mentioned figures are representative. There is a need for alternative socialist and realist projects to be developed by active students and those artists who see their situation as problematic. It is necessary that artists understand the class struggle. All projects, on pain of reinforcing hegemony, must avoid all 'participatory' relations.

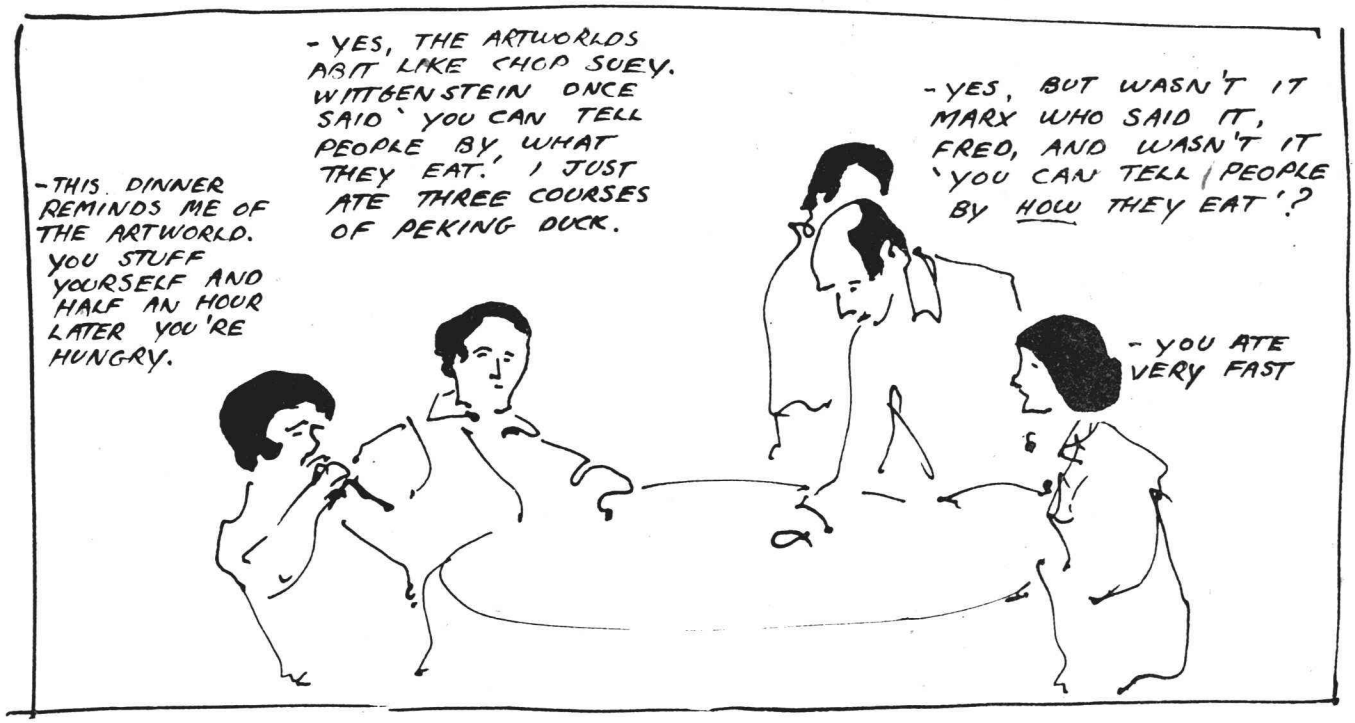
Banbury, Oxfordshire.


CHUCK AND KITTY
BY CAROLE CONDE & KARL BEVERIDGE
IN
THE EDGE OF EDGE
-I CAN NO SAY ANYTHING, KITTY, IT HARD TO THINK.*
-IS OKAY, CHUCKY, I NO SAY ANYTHING EITHER. BUT YOU SAY NICELY.*
*把它放在山肚下这个地方没有

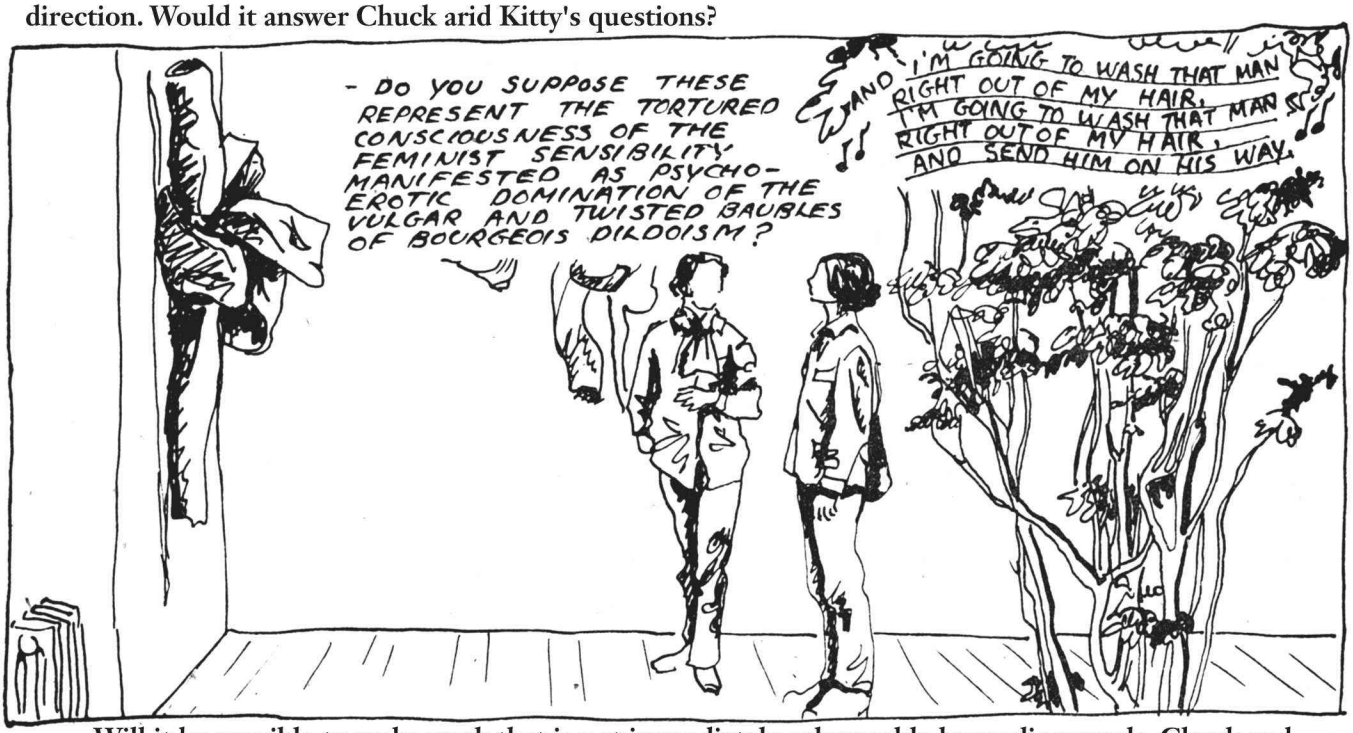
Chuck and Kitty are 'foreign' artists. Like thousands of others, they came to New York seeking those elusive muses, fame and fortune. Chuck and Kitty worked hard, achieving moderate success in the high-pressure artworld. This success afforded them a fashionably pleasant life. But they weren't happy. Our story begins about a year ago, when the authenticity of their 'quality' avant-garde-kunst was up in the air. "How could this happen?" Chuck and Kitty puzzled, casting about in a sea of doubt.

-THE BAR ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE. WHY DO ALL THOSE SMARTS FROM NEW JERSEY COME HERE?
- I LIKE TO LOOK AT ART, I HATE TO READ IT. IT'S NO FUN.
- I JUST GOT BACK. ITALY, GERMANY, ICELAND, JAPAN, INDIA, AUSTRALIA, ENGLAND...
- WHEN DO YOU WORK?
- WASN'T BOB'S SHOW SUPER? THERE'S A PARTY AT MONA'S, YOU GOING?

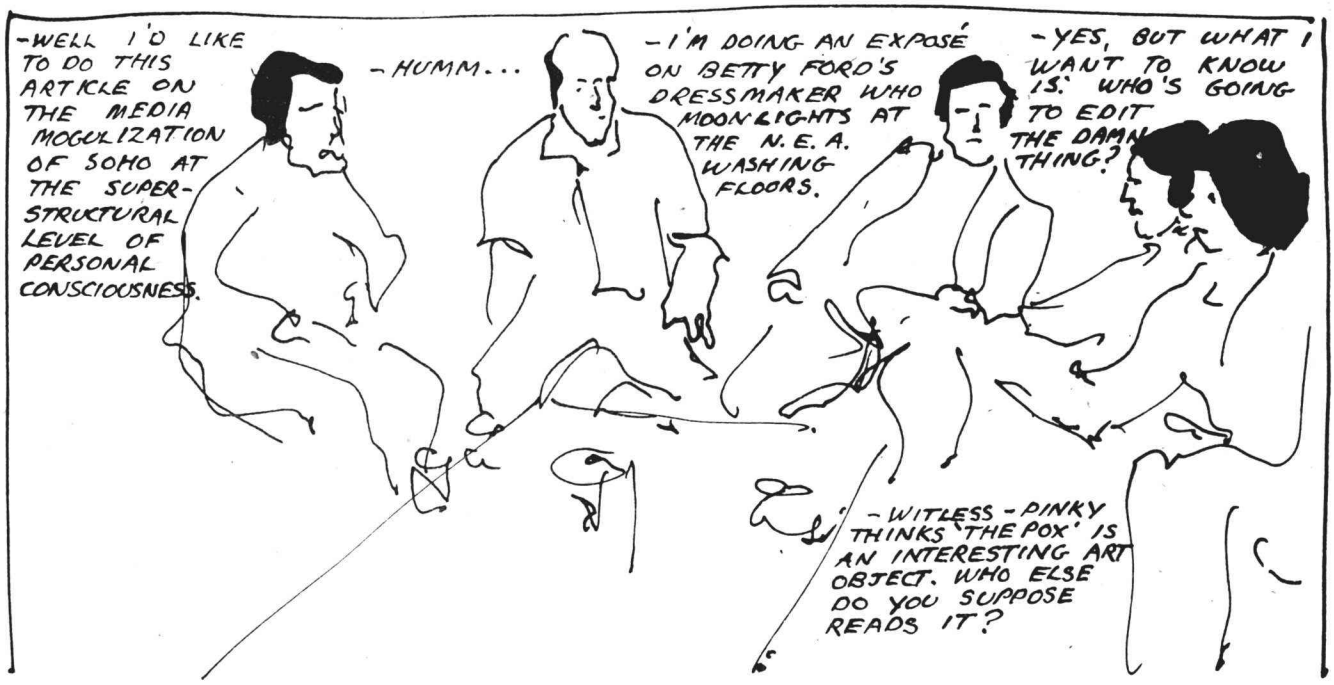
Chuck and Kitty accepted the hardships and disappointments of the art profession as 'normal'. No one really enjoyed the dog-eat-dog kunstmart, but one had to make a buck. Was there any alternative inside this 'community' for Chuck and Kitty? After all, wasn't it founded by dissatisfied intelligentsia and other sensitive types for escaping an avaricious world? And hadn't it now become a mystificatory propaganda industry, where artists, in the name of 'individualism', produced insanely uniform commodities? Chuck and Kitty were trapped. The very 'world' they'd chosen sealed their fate. Where could they turn?


-THIS DINNER REMINDS ME OF THE ARTWORLD. YOU STUFF YOURSELF AND HALF AN HOUR LATER YOU'RE HUNGRY.
- YES, THE ARTWORLDS ABIT LIKE CHOP SUEY. WITTGENSTEIN ONCE SAID 'YOU CAN TELL PEOPLE BY WHAT THEY EAT.' I JUST ATE THREE COURSES OF PEKING DUCK.
- YES, BUT WASN'T IT MARX WHO SAID IT, FRED, AND WASN'T IT 'YOU CAN TELL PEOPLE BY HOW THEY EAT'?
- YOU ATE VERY FAST

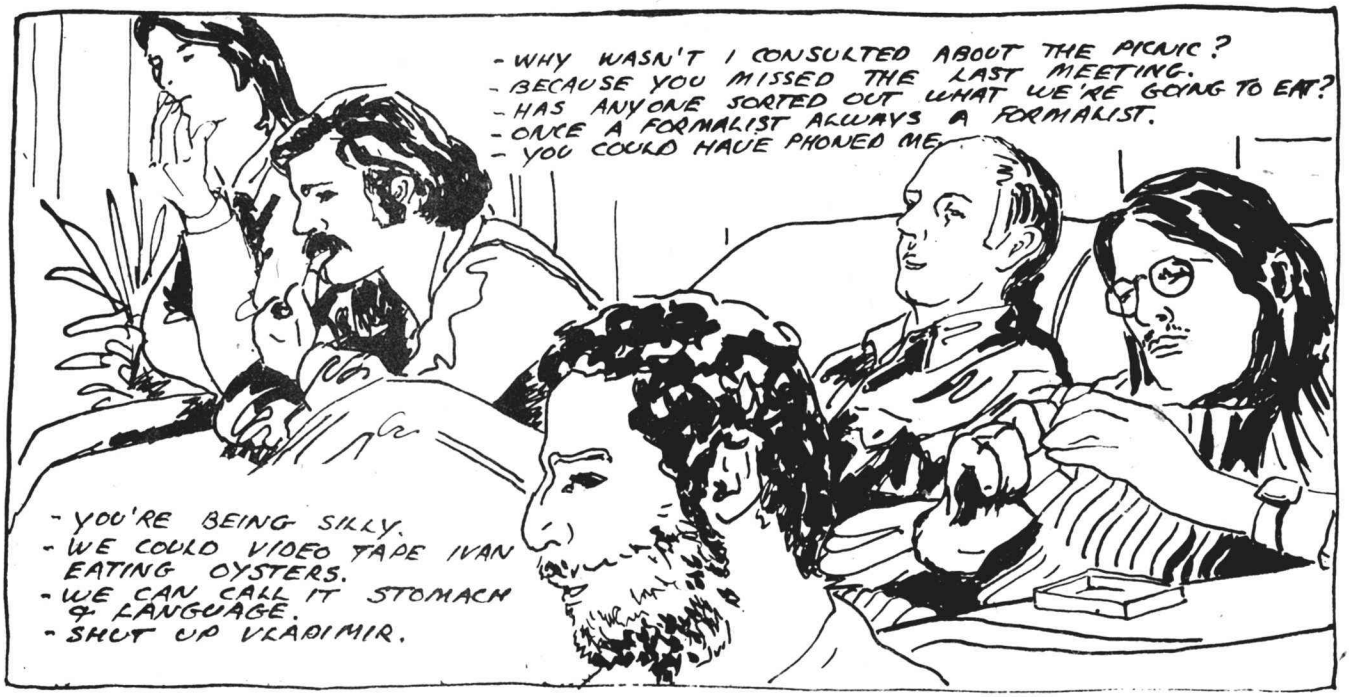
But Chuck and Kitty were not alone. There were others, their friends Fred and Ivan among them, who knew the game was up. They had often met socially; dinner in Chinatown, at their lofts, or at kunst-land soirees. They'd laugh about the perversities of the artworld, abuse the shit out of fellow artists, and worry about the future. The conversations and once humorous contradictions intensified with time. Chuck and Kitty began to work with Fred and Ivan. The experience of frustration and despair took on a direction. Would it answer Chuck arid Kitty's questions?


- DO YOU SUPPOSE THESE REPRESENT THE TORTURED CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE FEMINIST SENSIBILITY MANIFESTED AS PSYCHO-EROTIC DOMINATION OF THE VULGAR AND TWISTED BAUBLES OF BOURGEOIS DILDOISM?
AND I'M GOING TO WASH THAT MAN RIGHT OUT OF MY HAIR, I'M GOING TO WASH THAT MAN RIGHT OUT OF MY HAIR, AND SEND HIM ON HIS WAY.

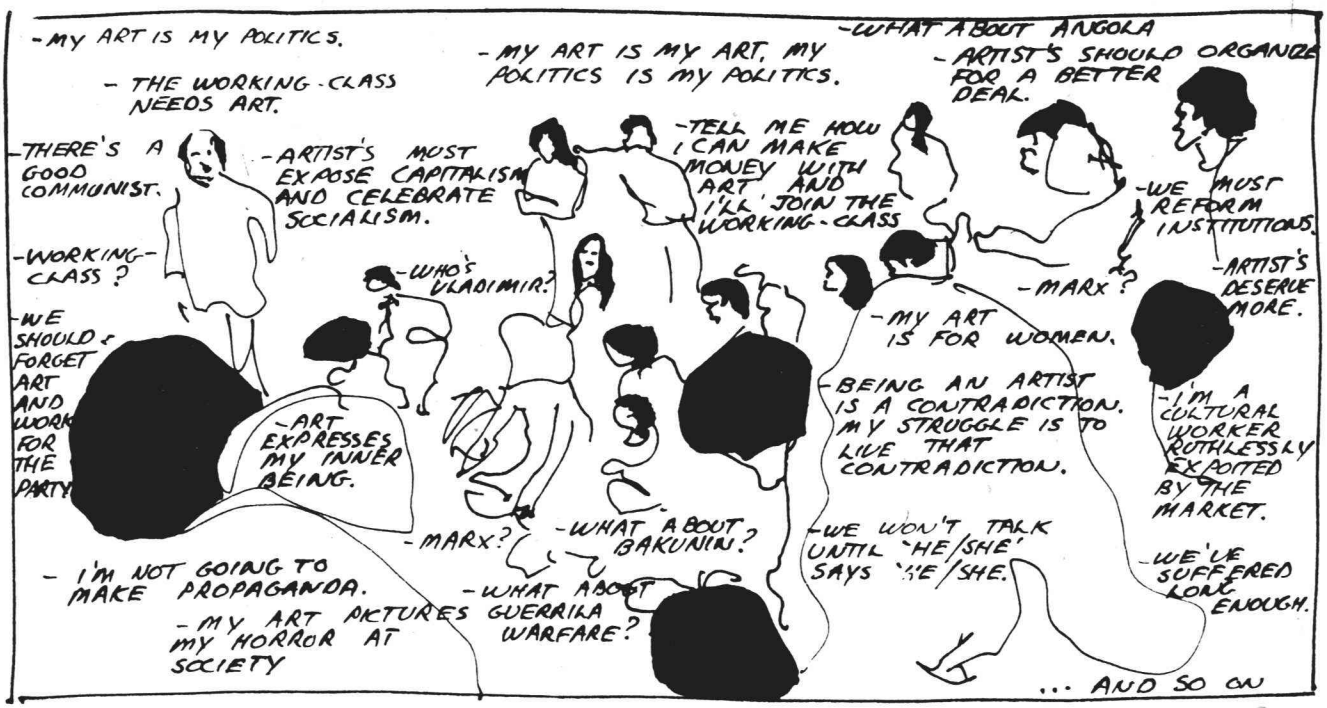
Will it be possible to make work that is not immediately subsumable by media moguls, Chuck and Kitty pondered? The artworld 'crisis' already had its apologists. The 'progressive' march of Modernism had climaxed, it was announced. Now in the name of 'pluralism' anything goes, including 'politics'. But what about the market? Without 'rules' the artist is now completely subservient to the traffickers and bureaucrats of art, and, to the palaces of culture. Sociability now determined marketability. But what if social relations were developed among artists themselves, Chuck and Kitty speculated, instead of with those in power?


-WELL I'D LIKE TO DO THIS ARTICLE ON THE MEDIA MOGULIZATION OF SOHO AT THE SUPER-STRUCTURAL LEVEL OF PERSONAL CONSCIOUSNESS.
-HUMM...
-I'M DOING AN EXPOSÉ ON BETTY FORD'S DRESSMAKER WHO MOONLIGHTS AT THE N.E.A. WASHING FLOORS.
-YES, BUT WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS: WHO'S GOING TO EDIT THE DAMN THING?
-WITLESS - PINKY THINKS 'THE POX' IS AN INTERESTING ART OBJECT. WHO ELSE DO YOU SUPPOSE READS IT?

Chuck and, Kitty attended Art & Languish meetings on Fred and Ivan's invitation. These 'like-minded' individuals got together to discuss their next blast of artistic fury. The atmosphere was guardedly tense, ideas and information were cautiously 'traded'. Some (no names) had a better position in the kunstmart, thus a better 'trading value', which no one challenged for fear of 'power-failure'. Besides, their ideas always 'sounded good'. Chuck and Kitty's 'trading' credibility was low. In time, they thought, they'd 'catch up'. But would they?


- WHY WASN'T I CONSULTED ABOUT THE PICNIC?
- BECAUSE YOU MISSED THE LAST MEETING.
- HAS ANYONE SORTED OUT WHAT WE'RE GOING TO EAT?
- ONCE A FORMALIST ALWAYS A FORMALIST.
- YOU COULD HAVE PHONED ME.
- YOU'RE BEING SILLY.
- WE COULD VIDEO TAPE IVAN EATING OYSTERS.
- WE CAN CALL IT STOMACH & LANGUAGE.
- SHUT UP VLADIMIR.

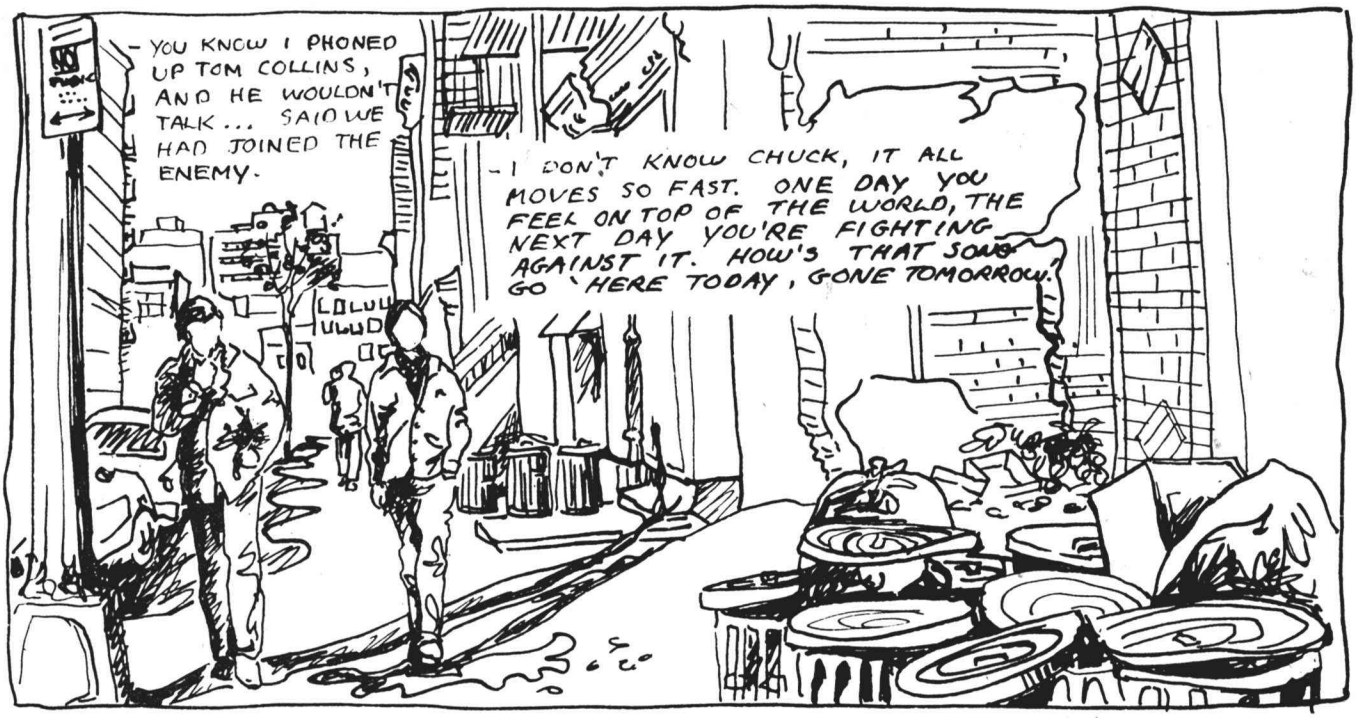
There was a growing concern that Art & Languish merely reflected the larger kunstwelt; it was just a question of scale. How do you get social, much less ideological cohesion, in a slippery market which celebrates individual opportunism? Chuck and Kitty competed to protect a 'surface' essential to their market survival. How else could they sell work, receive grants, get airplane tickets? Besides, the psychodrama was engrossing and averted facing the real world. Psychology protected privilege. Can Art & Languish conquer 'personalities' and shun the market?


-MY ART IS MY POLITICS.
- THE WORKING-CLASS NEEDS ART.
-THERE'S A GOOD COMMUNIST.
-ARTIST'S MUST EXPOSE CAPITALISM AND CELEBRATE SOCIALISM.
-WORKING-CLASS ?
-WE SHOULD FORGET ART AND WORK FOR THE PARTY
-ART EXPRESSES MY INNER BEING.
- I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE PROPAGANDA.
-MY ART PICTURES MY HORROR AT SOCIETY
-MARX?
-WHO'S VLADIMIR?
-WHAT ABOUT BAKUNIN?
-WHAT ABOUT GUERRILA WARFARE?
-MY ART IS MY ART, MY POLITICS IS MY POLITICS.
-TELL ME HOW I CAN MAKE MONEY WITH ART AND I'LL JOIN THE WORKING-CLASS
-WHAT ABOUT ANGOLA
-ARTIST'S SHOULD ORGANIZE FOR A BETTER DEAL.
-MARX ?
-MY ART IS FOR WOMEN.
-BEING AN ARTIST IS A CONTRADICTION. MY STRUGGLE IS TO LIVE THAT CONTRADICTION.
-WE WON'T TALK UNTIL 'HE/SHE' SAYS 'HE/SHE.
-WE MUST REFORM INSTITUTIONS.
-ARTIST'S DESERVE MORE.
-I'M A CULTURAL WORKER RUTHLESSLY EXPOITED BY THE MARKET.
-WE'VE SUFFERED LONG ENOUGH.
... AND SO ON

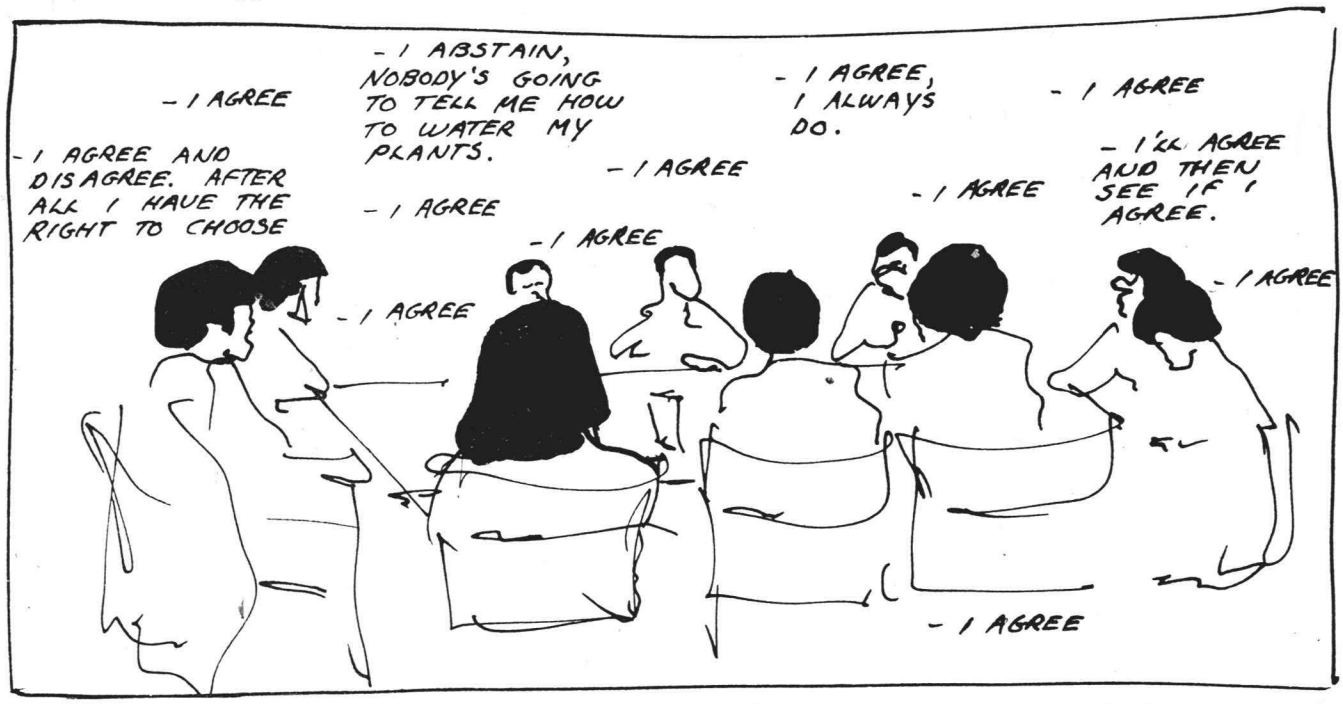
Others in the art community sniffed a 'crisis'. Regular meetings were called. Opinions and positions covered the spectrum from dimwit to dilettante. The Artists Mania for Confused Claptrap (A.M.C.C.) was probably the most radical 'movement' around, but ego-trips reigned and ideological progress was negligible. Some local pundits were amazed that artists even got together! Strange as it may seem, people still came, and some actions were taken. The members of Art & Languish weren't much, help, behaving much as everyone else. Why were they as hopeless?

-ART & LANGUISH NEEDS A PLATFORM.
-PLATFORM !.. I'LL DIE FIRST
-HUMM... SOUNDS CHINESE TO ME.
- WE HAVE TO SORT OUT OUR EPISTOMOLOGICAL RELATION TO THE W.C.
- W.C.?
-LOOK THE W.C.'S OKAY, BUT WHAT ABOUT ME?
- BUNCH OF BUREAUCRATS. WE NEED CREATIVE SOLUTIONS.

As you might have suspected, the shit hit the fan at Art & Languish. Finally, someone put their thumb on it: LIBERAL PARALYSIS. 'We aren't organized'. Collective work and the struggle for ideological unity were imperative. The artist in most hit the ceiling, panic ensued: Thought police! Labor camps! Hordes of nameless cadres closing down studios! But the comfort of being the *betes noires* of kunstland had worn thin. The modest organizational proposal which had elicited such hysteria was to seriously reconstruct social and productive relations, not to form a part-time collective, allowing week-ends-of bourgeois 'freedom'. Could they succeed?


- YOU KNOW I PHONED UP TOM COLLINS, AND HE WOULDN'T TALK... SAID WE HAD JOINED THE ENEMY.
- I DON'T KNOW CHUCK, IT ALL MOVES SO FAST. ONE DAY YOU FEEL ON TOP OF THE WORLD, THE NEXT DAY YOU'RE FIGHTING AGAINST IT. HOW'S THAT SONG GO 'HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW.'

What did this mean for Chuck and Kitty? Was it a mistake? What about their 'identities'? Were they becoming puppets serving some dark ideological demagogue? Was it just a passing phase? Chuck and Kitty had enjoyed their comfort and mobility. Could they give that up? Was their commitment strong enough? Was it right? Experience told them *yes*, but training and background fought against it, their interior petty bourgeoisie told them *no*. Questions continued to plague them. Could Chuck and Kitty find true happiness with socialism?


- I AGREE
- I ABSTAIN, NOBODY'S GOING TO TELL ME HOW TO WATER MY PLANTS.
- I AGREE, I ALWAYS DO.
- I AGREE
- I AGREE AND DISAGREE. AFTER ALL I HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE
- I AGREE
- I'LL AGREE AND THEN SEE IF I AGREE.
- I AGREE
- I AGREE
- I AGREE
- I AGREE
- I AGREE

We'll leave Chuck and Kitty, Art & Languish, and their problems. Can they fight individualism and find unity in the capitalist world? How are they going to make ends meet? What are the concrete conditions they face? What, in fact, will they do? Can they develop a positive relation, given their cultivation and privileges, to the class struggle? Yes, the class struggle! And make no mistake, "When it comes to the revolution" it was heard said "*we know* we'll be up-against-the-wall-motherfuckers."

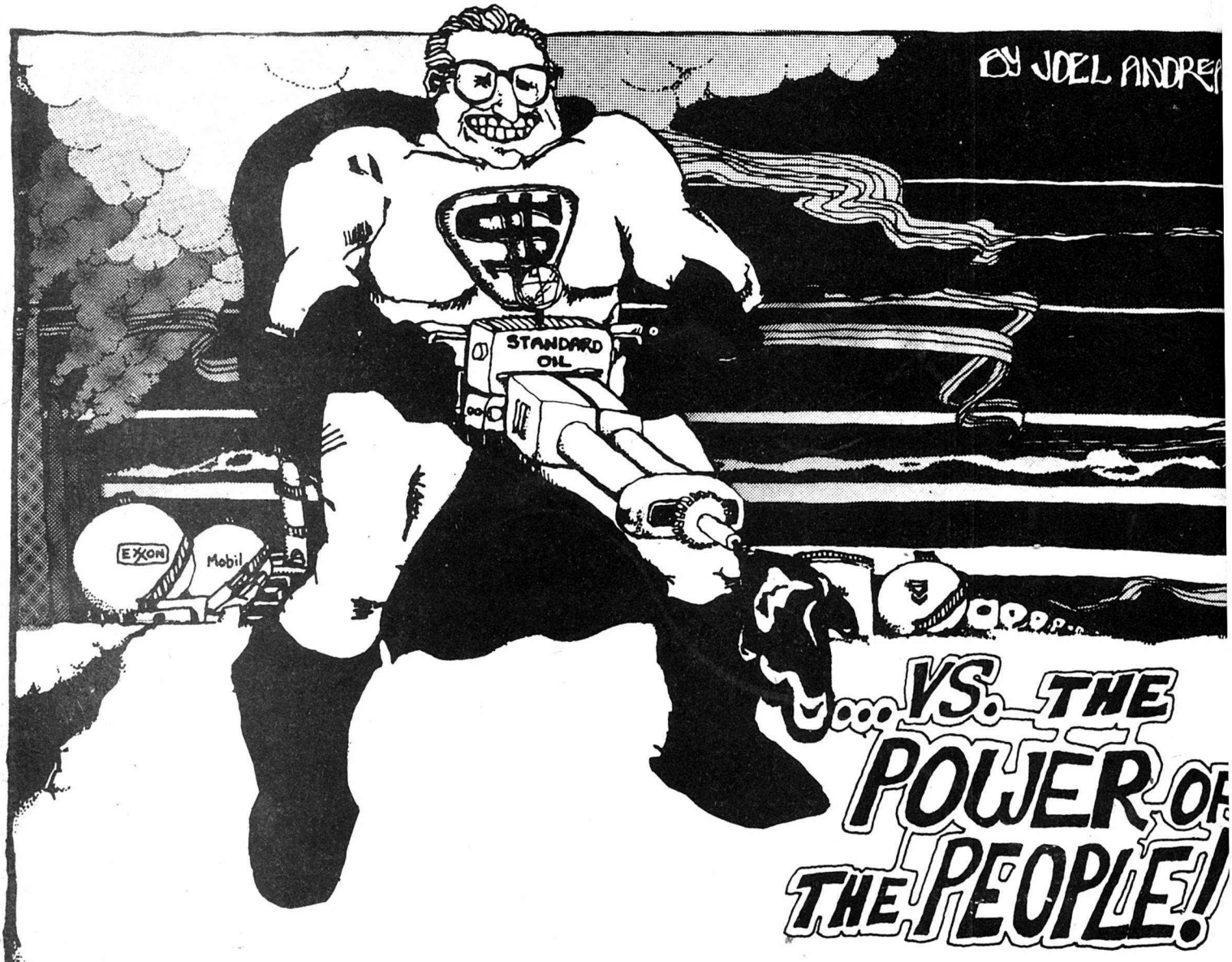
REVISED 1975 EDITION

PUBLISHED BY NACLA

75

THE INCREDIBLE

$ROCKY



FEATURING...

AMERICA'S RICHEST FAMIL

REVIEW

THE INCREDIBLE ROCKY

STEVE LOCKHARD

'The Incredible Rocky', Joel Andreas, North American Congress on Latin America,' NY, 1975. Available for $1 *from: NACLA, Box 226, Berkeley, Calif, 94701; Box 57, Cathedral Station, NY, NY 10025.*

While Dondi is out searching for sunken treasure and Dagwood is continuing to fatten Mr. Dithers' gut, Scrooge McDuck practices fascist ideology and Superman solves all our problems. American, comics entertain while reinforcing the status quo.

Breaking from the tradition of content of contemporary American comics (humoring the banalities of life-promoting escape from its realities), Andreas' *The Incredible Rocky* uncovers a giant gas-guzzling 'monster',' controlling government, business, education and culture. By stating that "everything in this book is true," Andreas at once destroys a myth of American innocence while creating another myth operating on the level of the comic. That is, he utilizes the cultural association of the American comic form with non-traditional content within that form. He does not quite follow the form of the American comic. Neither does he follow the other best known form of comic—the Chinese.

The development of American comic books began with the introduction of comic strips in newspapers just before the turn of the century. By providing entertainment to people finding the news generally meaningless, comics increased newspaper circulation. The first comics provided comment on social issues, a provision totally eliminated when syndicates formed to control their circulation. During the Second World War comic books began to deal with harsher realities. Action comics, glorifying the death and destruction of war for example, led 'logically' to monster tales of death and gore. True crime comics, 'explaining criminal motives,' dramatized subversive action. The accusations of "corruption of the minds of America's youth" led to the formulation of a comics code authority, despite Congressional investigations finding the accusations to be false. The purse string of 'educated mothers' quite successfully eliminated non-approved publications.

In China today, the same comics read by children are read by adults. The stories are forthright with no elements of escapism or vulgar appeal. They are often adapted from plays or films, which are in turn taken from novels. Chinese comics are the end product of an operation carefully thought out in such a way as to achieve capillary penetration of the masses. But even earlier events of history.

But even earlier, events of history and everyday life were the chosen themes. There were many series on the Boxer Rebellion, destructive effects on opium smokers' families; another on the anachronism of Confucian principles in a developing society. All of these were printed on large sheets, one for each story, or as strips in newspapers.

American comics imported in the 1920's influenced the Chinese form.Early ones, first in English but later translated, circulated only among the children of merchant families who went to foreign schools and only in cities where there were a number of English, French

or American colleges. Soon specialized publishing houses sprang up; original Chinese comics were modeled on the imports, and made their way from the coast to the interior. "Imported or domesticated, often inspired by the West but with local variations, historical or purely imaginary, the comics were fated to reach ever larger numbers of the population."

When the Communists took over in 1949, they increased the production of comics as an ideological and cultural weapon. These early comics were addressed, as in the West, to the young. Adults had novels in photograph form, like American 'movie magazines,' the population being 85 to 90 per cent illiterate at this time. Eventually the comics began to reach the adult public; they became serious and indeed severe, intent upon representing the correct ideology, that is, the thought of Chairman Mao. Like other cultural expressions, the comics inevitably reflected internal political dissension: hundreds of series printed between 1960 and 1965 were influenced by the 'black' anti-Mao current. They were later taken out of circulation.

For Chinese comics, it is not sufficient for a story to be understandable by everybody; it must also win their approval, both in content and form. Before publishing, the artist visits an arbitrary group of people representing the livelihood of the characters portrayed. "The people are always right, and it is our job to serve them. And if an artist wants to serve them sincerely, he will defer to their ideological and aesthetic objections."

Like a Chinese comic, *The Incredible Rocky* bases its content in social reality. Like an American comic, its subject matter humors in part that reality. Talking gasoline pumps, dignified pigs and speaking maps reveal corporate capitalism's allegiance to family capitalism. The Rockefeller family's part in the destructive web of imperialism is seen in their concentration of production and capital, beginning with John D. Rockefeller I and his Standard Oil Trust, which, even when broken-up by the anti-trust laws, was still a monopoly. Dialogues from the occasional hypocrite and oppressed peo,ples explain how their empire has grown and grown and grown, merging bank capital with' industrial capital, creating their own little 'finance-capital' oligarchy which (in combination with others), virtually rules that country portrayed in this comic book; indeed, its world: The Rockefellers are said to "control" $280 billion worth of corporations: 20% of American banking, 20% of all US industry, churches, cultural centers, universities and media; suggesting that it is chiefly through the Rockefeller empire that the international monopolies of capitalists have formed together to divide the world among themselves. Andreas states, "The Rockefellers do not own these billion dollar corporations. They probably own less than 5% of the stock of these corporations (billions of dollars, nevertheless), This is enough stock to control these corporations because the Rockefellers have also centralized their control through their banks, insurance companies, and law firms …"

A series of full page drawings provide an epilogue in which 'the people,' supporting a giant structure of money, oil wells, tanks, bridges and buildings, overthrow their oppression, destroying the Chairman of the Board enthroned at the top.

Andreas, combining this content extracted from reality and the comic form, has created a strange form of 'low art' *about* the ruling class. In a capitalist society, which primarily values 'high art' *for* the ruling class, the value of *Rocky* is not readibly accessible, its value being rather a *social function* for its potentially unlimited audience. This audience is, however, restrained in capitalist society: classified *'subversive,"The Incredible Rocky* is not widely distributed. Fitting into the category 'radical literature, ' it is annexed accordingly in that book section added during the 60's when radicalism itself became another commodity. Whether in the back of the store, on the top floor of the Eighth Street Bookshop with 'all the heavy intellectual stuff,' the audience is 'sorted out' in this vast industry of the media industries; having little cultural impact. The system it consciously questions unconsciously but ruthlessly answers: "You may entertain those who already know but not educate those who want to be entertained."

New York, New York

AUTOPATRIPASSIONATA

CHRISTINE KOZLOFF & MAYO THOMPSON

At the risk of glorifying a morass of 'psychologized-ideology' questing for 'ontological-authcnticity', we recount how a strange region is being traversed at real historic risk. Come along, if you will, weary traveller…

On our trek we encountered someone walking in the opposite direction, muttering oaths, who said, "I do not know to what ends "you are going but do not continue in *that* direction."

Despite the warning, we carried on, eventually crossing an ice-floe and entering a region, a suburb it turned out, of a capitalist corner of the earth, called: Autopatripassionata.

Being ourselves vagabond social-sectional 'members' of an unsorted middle-class, we, quite normally, at first made contact with the folk of that region who can best be described as social-sectional plutocrat-admirers of Bakunin paradoxically impelled by 'anti-Jacobin' terror while being, at the same time, motivated in part to identify with the materialism of the Enlightenment embodied in Utopian -Socialism … that, plus a degree of Marx-via-Semiotics for spice-within-'reason'. Their fervor often left us gasping for breath in the charged atmosphere of a social-section on its way out of existence.

Having, in our lives, a certain amount of 'time' for anarchy, and having had ordinal acquaintance with many of these 'ideas' we studied how they were concatenated in' the members of this mini-society. We were not merely tourists however. For, our encounters with people are never a simple matter. That we, albeit vagabonds, have and recognize histories, makes for conflict in the best sense. Ultimately, we became so embroiled that emmigration proved far more difficult and 'emotional' than immigration. For us, something's lost but something's gained.

To their credit, Autopatripassionatans sensed the inequity of regional social conditions and desired change. They nobly envisioned a coming together of individuals and eagerly discussed it in a laissez-faire climate of presupposed 'liberte', 'egalite' and 'fraternite'.

Knowledge of bourgeois revolution's progress of expropriation coupled with fear of popular revolution's 'barbarism' made the Autopatripassionatans pine for communities of individuals founded on carefully orchestrated concepts of trust, fair-play and modified, non-prescriptive, environmental control relations; in some senses, worthy aspirations. However, there was a quandry over methodology … what comes first … etc.

The nearby presence of 'lower' classes organizing in historic struggle gave the change they sought the appearance of a collection of individually meaningful 'clarities of ideas' and ideologies, the putting into effect of which was unsorted. They wanted to feel 'positive' but were fearful and, given organizational necessities, felt coerced. Their materialism was unable to sort out how the individual could affect society, much less do so and keep all of his or her friends.

To conceive of organization as machinery is a pessimistic undervaluation of social change: as a process of individuals shouldering responsibility for their lives as a characteristic of conscious association that takes the forms of struggle that are necessary.

Vagabonds thirst for historicity. Our de-

parture from their midst was precipitated by our projectivity. Freedom lies in the "recognition of necessity" (Engels) and its understanding.

New York, New York

REVIEW

CHIC KICKING MUSE?

SHARLENE SPINGLER

Seven trench hardened panelists, Vito Acconci, Ian Burn, Carol Duncan, Lucy Lippard, Wylie Lucero, May Stevens and Nancy Spero, sat up and successively squealed about the forces incarcerating, surrounding the goods, services and/or entertainment which they serve—the vague, insatiable beast called society.

Rather than marvel at the designs on the Chinese Handcuff into which the artist sticks his or her piece, they discussed, 'Real Change or Slice of the Pie '.

At this point in time any segment of the aforementioned vague beast examined reveals sores, oozing with the same stuff, staining your blue or white collars. Sociality, the process whereby the being ventures out to discover how little is really expected of him, determines which boil to lance first.

Instead of viewing the following like a dentist at all autopsy waiting for them to get to the mouth, try archaeologist, scanning some 'potentially illuminating fragments'.

Acconci: It becomes clear that treating the gallery as some soft of guerrilla action is some sort of metaphor, not anything real. Gallery-Store-Place for Community; Gallery as place to possibly define some kind of structures of meaning, possibly shared meaning and that could then possibly be a kind of gallery as poster, gallery as slogan, gallery as slogan towards something else.

Spero: One activity leads to another for instance; the woman's galleries—which leads to invitationals, changing of shows in other countries, or working with other women, printmakers. Women have not had this kind of opportunity before … if it does continue perhaps a woman Picasso can appear.

Duncan: …. Some of the prisoners get to be trustees—special privileges, you may as well give that to women as well as men.

The Women's Movement, far from being radical in breaking down the family and assimilating individualist values, is a timely campaign to reintegrate the woman in that class into an advanced kind of capitalist economy where you have fully mobile, animised individuals who conceive of their freedom as personal expression, personal sexual license that does not extend to the working class …. you can't have radical change in the art world and not in the rest of society …. the stock market looks like a socialist set up compared to what goes on in the art market.

Burn: Obviously if we continue thinking in terms of some kind of larger slice of the pie, all that's going to happen is that the institutions that we all have pretty strong misgivings about are simply going to become more efficient and we'll just be locked in deeper and deeper. We have to take a very good long look at how our whole lives and how our particular lives in terms of educational history—how they are organized for us, and come to a few realizations where there's a sense in which organized is being disorganized, where the market in an institutionalized sense forces us to be institutionally individualized and there's no sense in which we can get connected up between each other.

We're not simply fighting for reform within institutions but actually reform of institutions.

Lippard: … until the whole society is changed, what we're talking about is minute change. Really we're talking about ordering our own lives so that we can deal with our

own lives and have some consciousness and try to figure out what comes next so that if revolution does come, or whatever it is that is coming, we're ready, we'll be there with some kind of consciousness. If we're not nurturing embryonic new values then nothing is going to happen when the time does come. It's upsetting to see that feminist goals differ very little from male careerism. I worry that women artists will be absorbed before they develop a solid value structure of their own. This is the reason it's particularly important for women to recognize the difference between their art and men's art. The sterilization of the art world is unquestionable. Responsibility of the artist to the rest of the world is something that the artist has totally copped out on. I as a critic who has identified with artists have done exactly the same thing.

Stevens: … I have been particularly active in the peace movement and I'm active with women's groups and I tend to deal with the question of community on that level. In my art I often use, not always but often, some political imagery which is another aspect of the desire for community. The question of who gets the art is something I don't feel I can control.

… what you were talking about Ian (Burn) is combining art work with political work and I'm saying I see a difference between the two. Political work, organizng people, changing their heads in terms of conversation, discussions, cannons and so forth.

Burn: But isn't that sort of what the traditional sense of art was meant to do? We found out that it wasn't.

Stevens: This linking up of art with the capitalist system and bourgeois society has a very long history and I don't know that it has ever happened any differently,.

Duncan: We don't have notions of art that are shared by the whole society. If you've got on one side a population whose life conditions make them much more in need, suitable to the kinds of mass produced entertainment, there's no authentic expression. Then there's an art side that is elitist, exists by virtue of the fact that it doesn't communicate to most people. The attraction of modernism is precisely its renunciation of a common language cause the common language is corrupted and manipulated by the conditions of capitalism.

Burn: You've got to realize that language is as much our oppressor as anything else.

Lucero: I did a book called *Sadistic Romances.* This was distributed through, I think, underground channels. I thought this was a kind of nice alternative system. But it turned out that the Mafia was distributing it on Times Square. I don't really know if that system is any preferable to Castelli. You've got to do it for some kind of established distributor. The art world is not more corrupt than any other system I can see.

Rare is the individual who relinquishes power once gained. Ethical renunciates are uninteresting if poor; —given a St. Francis, a Gottoma Buddha, a Michael J. Brody (the short lived Oleo-Margarine heir who gave it all away, now there's a 'story').

In another sense, it's difficult to raise one's energy to the Fourth Cakra, the Anahata, and lobby in the heart with infinite compassion for the terrible beauty of nature, as it's called in the Himalayas.

Krassner: *A counter intelligence program which includes the use of deliberate misinformation, designed to mislead the public and divide and spread paranoia among both above and underground revolutionaries.*

Vito Acconci wondered if art can ever attain a position other than one analogous to pure science. I do seem to remember being at the 1974 Kosuth display at Castelli's and being distracted by the groans from Acconci's exhibit upstairs at Sonnabend.

Sir Bernard Lovell: *In a strictly localized sense, a community can develop its scientific activity to support a framework of society.*

The Tibetan on the Broadway Corridor under enlightenment for Capricious Action says there's no way out. One of the problems is not wanting to escape until you're caught. Ken Kesey, having picked up a woman hitchhiker who took out a hash pipe while telling him of her discontent with her position of chambermaid at the Holiday Inn, interrupted her deliberations and told her to "Stick around, who else is gonna be working a Holiday Inn with a big ball of Hash".

Bum: Our problem is for you to stop listening to us and start talking to the people who you're likely to be dealing with.

New York, New York

CHRIS SMITH CONFRONTS NORMAN TROTSKY AND DAME FLORA LUXEMBURG, MANY OF THEIR COLLEAGUES, FURRY AND FEATHERED FRIENDS

ART & LANGUAGE"UK

If we say 'Marxism is Materialism', what can we mean? Another question (that's 'internal' to it) is 'What can we want? Are we looking for a change or transformation in/of our 'social existence', or a tranformation only in our economic relations? (A schema, or a plan for the nationalization-rationalization?—of the productive forces is a plan for socially productive relations in the sense that 'individual interests' must then be adjusted to social, or 'interpersonal' relations.) This is to raise the question whether or not the only substantive socio-historical issues are the distribution factors of economic and social relationships; a game of 'inhuman' calculation. Ideological views that a cultural revolution can (or must) precede economic revolution (in a meaningfully strict ordering) are hopeless: the former would be impossible without the latter …

The sense of Base and Superstructure, the sense of 'determining' should not obscure the prospect that Marx (and perhaps certain Marxism) discloses the possibilities of a withering away of economic-relations-as-base into an irrelevance. This may sound daft (or paradoxical) but it can be defended: historical development and dialectical penetration of Marx' teleology argues that it is the futility of its fixation with economic matters that condemns capitalism; its inhumanity is not just *its* economics, but the result ('product', perhaps) of its overvaluation of economic concerns to the exclusion of any other values. ('What will you talk about, in your family, among your friends, when the issues of economic survival arc more-or less redundant?' is a complex and not simplistic (trivial) question.)

The conditions of change are by no means 'authoritarian'. For the various social sections and classes, different possibilities are offered. Marx offers the members of a given class, or social section, no more (and no less) than the possibility of doing that which is important to it. This even when (importantly when) it's decision in this respect must lead to its supersession. He offers a form of analysis (a theory of possible action; this action is not monolithic in character). It's up to the various classes and social groups to provide analyses for themselves—decide (i.e. determine) their historical situation, to identify their historical concerns, etc.

Deifying (reifying) the worker, the 'rube', or etc., is not the same as understanding who can, or might do what (historically). A moralizing socialization, built on simplistic

identification, or association with workers does not avail one (qua 'artist', or etc.) of a conscious set of actions and tasks; rather it mystifies 'further this artist's (or etc.) relations vis-à-vis the means of production.

The 'modesty' of the artist who sees' himself as 'roleless', 'functionless', or jobless is idealist and fundamentally false. Even this self image encapsulated role is deep entrenched within capitalism.

It may well be possible to compile a list of non-transferable non-transformable roles within present society. This list however reaches in its structural complexity into the limited struggle to acquire first perspectives in the struggle against capitalism—at least—a possibility of dealing with its absurdities.

It is a dialectic and analytical mistake to assume that one's role within the present system secures a role post social transformation, The transparency of one's intra-systematic blather is highly problematic intersystematically; (e.g.) within the revolutionary framework Adam Smith and J. M. Keynes have important things to say in classical economics—they have little to add to the theory of Surplus Value.

Many pious hopes, moralizing enthusiams, are founded in fallacy: the artist who, on the presupposition that he is in the possession of a profundity, hopes to have a social ('revolutionary') role when he's translated that profundity, into a code acceptable to the masses.

His mistake mirrors the scandal of academic philosophy which sees itself as an ontologically distinct substance, that is, apart from the world of 'the workers', his, word or 'work' transmute the two distinct substances. Failure to recognise the (obvious) problematic tasks which must be approached by the intelligentsia and realized by them, however insecure and problematic, must signal an investment in a 'geneticist-idealist fallacy. That an artist does not see his job as that of having (or procuring) the leisure in which to produce a gratuitious aesthetic apparat does not mean that he doesn't use the apologetics of that ideology.

It is important not to confuse (e.g.) painting with the further ramification of 'artist'. The latter, bestowed and accepted, is a more-or-Iess dumb reflection of the ideology and practice of the ruling class. This is, of course,not the same as discharging a rôle peculiar to capitalism. But the/myth of the special 'gift' genetically bestowed, which still lurks behind most distribution-of-function apologetics, is peculiar to capitalism insofar as capitalism-underlies a role so determined: Philosophy/superstructural production as *management*.

So what transitional actions are possible? We find ourselves in (with) a social framework: Friends, colleagues, enemies. Practically, we've probably got to work in this framework, and not 'with the workers'. We can't just walk in: to recognize class division (and the historical meaning of class division) is to acquire a total prohibition on Doing-Things-For-The-Poor-Bastards consciousness. The workers don't want to reflect back the pathos of our indignations; what ate we to feel when technical transformations tell us they don't want it?

This is not a prohibition on working with the class groups outside (our) social section. It just seems important (necessary) that such

contacts be 'natural', not evangelical. This is not to say 'say nothing', 'have nothing to say'; neither is it to require that artists and their ilk rush-out to know a worker. At the same rime, you're bound to be tedious and vacuous if you've no friends who work for their livings. You're also likely to overrate, or overscale your capacity for action.

The grandiose assumptions that some leftist artists make could become endemic when we're all leftist *de rigeur*. The assumption that the 'Cultural' super-superstructure is capable of generating macro-social transformation on its own is a misunderstanding, and a symptom, of an immersion in the mythology of individualism and liberalism. And don't pretend this isn't true … Haven't you wished?

It's too too sick-makingly obvious that individual voluntarism is out in the transitional framework. The immediate problematic task is to work-out with whom various teleologically projected tasks can be performed; who, what, when, etc.?

Another thing is that biological survival presents an important problem: one job is likely to be as supportive of capitalism as

another from the point of view of the 'Marxist', as distinct from the lib-Ieft do-gooder. It will, palpably, be difficult or impossible for a Marxist to do certain jobs, even talk to, or care about some people however.

You're alienated anyway. That's axiomatic of capitalism. 'Action' devoted to authenticity via transformation of one's role (relations) *within* (i.e. essentially, and in its historical aspiration and character, projectively restricted within) the present system of relations is absurd. This is more than a noetic danger; bourgeois-revolution pessimism is not the same as knowing what you *can* do. The Owl of Mlinerva is always a bit late: that's no excuse for limping stolidly behind, unaware of its effort to fly.

The activity of artists will not break down class divisions; it may penetrate. historical-transformational reefs. Most 'penetrations' will be failures and as such may reciprocate 'aesthetic' transformations.

J. P. Sartre once said that the bourgeois would rather be called philistine than exploiter; he'd also rather be called exploiter by his 'artist' than by his workers … we have to call the fucking bastard something.

Banbury, Oxfordshire.

FOR YOUR REFERENCE

IAN BURN

History can be seen as a succession of different modes of production. The mode under which we live today is capitalism.

Within the mode [of production], we must distinguish between *productive forces* and *productive relations.*

The productive forces consist of the following three elements: (i) workers, or the labor force of producers, (ii) means of labor or production, (iii) objects of labor. Of these, the workers or producers are the primary as well as the decisive factor.

The productive relations refer to the relations established among people through the forms of social exchange. There are also three aspects to these: (i) the form of ownership of the means of production, (ii) the organization or mutual relations resulting from the form of ownership of the means of production, (iii) the form of distribution which depends on the above two aspects.

In most historical circumstances, the ownership of the means of production is the decisive factor. It tends to be the determining factor of the mutual relations among people, as well as determining the form of distribution.

The productive forces and the productive relations give dialectical form to the mode of production. Productive forces cannot exist in the absence of the relations of production; but at the same time these forces provide the basis on which certain productive relations develop. The productive forces have to be regarded as the principle and hence the most revolutionary factor. Any significant change of the productive forces is sure to force a corresponding change in the productive relations. However this shouldn't be thought of as simple cause-and-effect. Productive relations do not just follow suit in a passive way. Rather, they react upon the productive forces, promoting or hindering their development or change … and hence can play a decisive role under certain circumstances. When the productive relations obstruct or oppose the development of productive forces, this force changes into the productive relations and leads to the overthrow of the social order and the establishment of new relations conforming to the further development of the productive forces, Then the transformation of productive relations promotes rather than hinders the development of productive forces.

In considering such transformations, the distinction should always be made between the *material* transformation of the economic conditions of production, and the *ideological* forms in which we become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.

Furthermore, as much as we have established our social relations in conformity with

our material productivity, we have also produced principles, ideas and categories, in conformity with our social relations.

Thus, our ideas, our taxonomic relations, are not eternal. They are *historical and transitory products.*

(Most of the above will be found, almost verbatim, in Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy* and *Critique of Political Economy.)*

Given our histories, as producers whose material base is "high culture", our problems are manifold. The principles, ideas and category, which defie that role (job), *are transitory.* The form of cultural labor open to us is defined as necessary only within a capitalist mode of production. That is a fact informing whatever we do. Given that—how do we participate in the struggle for a 'more human' way of life? What provides a basis for our participation?

A steelworker understands the necessity of his labor to both capitalist society and socialist society. His labor remains necessary, though the social relations of his production may undergo revolutionary change. The necessity of his labor thus provides the basis of his struggle.

We have no such basis. The "necessity" of our work is superstructurally maintained and a matter of cultural-political expedience. Our social relations are "cultural relations". A cultural radicalization may contribute to changing society but it is not a decisive factor … on the other hand, it inevitably will serve equally well the conservative forces in society.

Thus—must we, as artists, commit "class suicide" in order to be reborn as people who can directly participate in the social struggle, in order to obtain a real basis for that struggle?

Is our role in the struggle for a more human way of life to be more than a transitional role, a way of superseding our roles?

Although these questions are correct questions, we have to regard them as premature before a really ideologically-saturated analysis of our existing situation has been achieved.

The ramifications of the social/cultural distinction (interpenetration) are still largely a mystery. For instance, not much is elucidated by asking what is socially productive about what we do culturally. Marx argued, in the *Grundrisse,* that a piano-maker is obviously a productive worker,—and probably the person who distributes the piano is a productive worker since he also contributes to the realization of surplus value. On this criterion, the person who plays the piano *cannot* be a productive worker. But this analysis is specific to the capitalist mode of production—it doesn't suggest anything to us about cultural production in a society which is not organized around profit-motives and the interests of a few.

Does this matter? Does it matter that we have no cultural "goals" to work towards? Is it adequate to say, we know what is (culturally) wrong but don't know what would be culturally right? Is it enough to say that we are working towards a thorough-going critique of the (our) present situation and this is informed by *social* goals regardless of cultural 'effect.,'? The way social goals inform what we do has to be regarded as a higher logical level than (culturally-oriented) "political art" or what-have-you. It is pointless trying to go into an explanation that our goals don't have any implications *in* this (dominant) culture!

Under capitalism, social relations are constantly being projected as independent of the real material conditions, the conditions which give rise to those relations. This particular principle of bourgeois ideology has encouraged the assumption of autonomy of the intellectual and cultural worker in this society. I'm not prepared to argue, if someone *believes* they are free (believes in the autonomy of what they are doing), whether or not it follows that they really *are* free. It is a weak argument either way. The concern is with the inversion of priorities which this leads to. The preceding condition is formed by these beliefs: (i) ,the superstructure is regarded as self-determining in some way, and (ii) the superstructure is regarded as determining of the material base!

The present state of "high art" is a blatant instance of what happens when an activity operates with ideological principles which obfuscate the essential material conditions of that activity. (And this state will persist until the producers of that art realize that they are the primary and hence decisive factor in

changing that circumstance,)

The logic of capitalism has successfully defined cultural work as separate from primary productive work, work which is tied directly to the economic base. The socio-psychological effect of this has been to sequester "creativity" in a section of its own, as the prerogative of a "gifted few", and at the same time denying the (basic right to) creativity of everyone else (that is, for them to see what is or what can be creative about *what they themselves do everyday).* But, because the dominant ideology maintains that this is naturally so, and because society produces structures which materially represent it as so, it doesn't follow that it necessarily *is* so. While bourgeois ideology prevents our seeing it otherwise, it does not mean that it cannot and will not be otherwise.

The perhaps simple point being made here is that such a separation of basic work from culture need not (and cannot) prefigure in a view of a more human society.

That does not mean we can say what such a society would be like. Not at all! But if such an idea *informs* criticism of prevailing society and culture, then that criticism *doesn't* presuppose the continuation of culture along present lincs. One is then not involved in cultural criticism but with active social criticism of culture.

On the surface it may all appear to amount to the same thing. But the (mere?) issue of *stress* presupposes radically different (contradictory) directions. Any analysis must be able to show this. Consider what happens when we do presuppose a social setting … when we sit down and talk (say, as some of us have recently, with a number of artists of the, unfortunately named, *Artists Meeting for Cultural Change),* we seem to interact on a social Ievel. That *we* all are sitting down talking together is a fact of cultural-mediation (—we might be talking together just "as people" but the janitor from across the street certainly isn't sitting talking with us!). The problem is that we persist in treating this culturally determined "social" form as perfectly natural rather than unnatural as it really is.

It is thus crucial that we start dealing with our social relations in ways which are *opposed* to how they are culturally given at present. The point must be grasped of organizing ourselves around these social relations *as social relations,* not as a function of cultural forms. In so doing, the social relations become potentially revolutionary. Methodologically, these relations are our only resource. And, finally, they form the only basis for *genuine* criticism of what each other of us do. This basis can inform *what* we do, the kinds of relations it is possible to have to what we do. Given all this, only then *might* some actions be revolutionary, not merely in content or subject or theme, but also in method.

In this, perhaps, lies a "role". As "workers", sectionalized, socially marginalized, and ideologically incorporated, we can only rebuild ways of participating through recognizing our common interests with other workers, that is, by seeing any role we have *as subordinate to the historic task of the working class.*

NOTE 1

Understanding the material base of recent (high) art requires an analysis of the form in which the production-distribution relation has developed. This is not talking about the shift from the "primitive" situation of a direct and personal relation between artist and patron to that relation becoming a function of a middle-person, the dealer, We have come a long way since then. That area of a once relatively simple transaction has burgeoned into a massive and organizationally complex industry. Now—the logic of capitalist expansion entails not merely market expansion but large-scale (re)organization and surveillance of all facets of the industry. With the evolution of monopoly capitalism, areas of production which allowed easy re-organization along large-scale lines were generally the first to be so incorporated. The motive of a few large profits replacing many small profits put pressure on the seemingly less easy areas, One by one, they were incorporated, but not without great changes in each industry. (Think of how monopolistic organization of the food industry has transformed, not just food-buying habits, but also the eating habits of this country.) One of the

most difficult areas to conceive of as such a (monopolistic) industry has been art production. However, even this has advanced in the past two decades, though admittedly not without considerable government interest and support. What this demonstrates is that with certain forms of organization of production it is not necessary to own the means of production in order to determine production, control can be achieved through monopoly over distribution (all its forms, museum and media dissemination, as well as market distribution). As far as *who* controls the industry we need look no further than the sources of capital on which the industry is dependent: the State, and the moguls of private enterprise. The result is today that every economic transaction an artist enters into either is an integral part of that industry or is at least significantly influenced by it.

NOTE 2

Given this, we should consider the *distortions* that the growth of a monopolistic industry has introduced into art production itself. Since it is not always easy to see, it may be helpful to point out tendencies in another industry than art. The building industry has been especially prone to organization along large-scale monopolistic lines. For example, when my grandfather started a small building firm some sixty years ago (in Australia), he was able to compete for jobs in all areas of the industry. A large job meant little more than employing more workers (since they were still considered journeymen, this was no problem) and getting financing from either the client or the bank. Over the years, various areas of the building industry which lent themselves to large-scale organization and profit-making—for example, housing construction, factory construction, shop-fitting—became monopolized by big business. Not only this, but as a consequence the actual forms of production underwent drastic change—one obvious example being prefabrication in housing. Generally these changes involved certain technological innovations, which not incidentally meant using 'advanced' technological hardware economically inaccessible to a small businessman. (That is, it wouldn't pay to rent the equipment for one job, one needed to own the equipment and keep it in constant use.) It should be unnecessary to go into how this has transformed a worker's relation to what he is constructing The rest of the industry has been "streamlined" and has defined itself in techniques of production exclusive to large organization. In term of "the industry as a whole", it no longer is a whole-scale of profits and interests has isolated the parts of the industry. When the government speaks of assisting the building industry, it is only talking about one part of the indus-try—and, to a considerable extent, that stands as the *official* definition of the industry.

Admittedly this is glossing far too much, but it is still apparent that (i) one part of the industry has become the official definition of the entire industry, and (ii) within that part there has occurred a distorted development innovated in the interests of larger profits and maintenance of control over the industry.

The analogies speak for themselves.

Espanola, New Mexico

REVIEW

CONVOY

MAYO THOMPSON

10-44: C.W. McCall (a character from an Omaha, Nebraska bread company advertising campaign) is the record business handle of an advertising executive named Bill Fries. His 'hit', 'Convoy', about a spontaneous, coast-to-coast 'rebellion', delivered in 10-35 lingo on a high-tech rig earned him and MGM Records (now a division of Polydor Inc.) a lot of green stamps. 10-35 lingo has subsequently been expropriated and translated to

disarm it and fuel petty-bourgeois opportunism. But its real 10-35 meaning is historically embedded in real convoys, as witnessed during the 'energy crunch'. The truckers organized real 10-34's for smokeys and 10-12's in DC. The FCC was down on 'Convoy' because they feared it might promote lawless ratchet-jaws in eighteen-wheelers to view the five-five, chicken-coops with comic-books, bears with ears, etc. as just more of, part of the Uncle Sam fat load that could be cleaned up by getting the hammer down; even though Fries explained 'Convoy' as "… fun and games …" it was temporarily banned in Iowa.

Given wall-to-wall bears and the state of the Teamsters after the Taft-Hartley injunction and the Kennedy administration, the 10-17 for eighteen-wheelers is an organizational 10-100.

Truckers bought this 'hit' but that's four-; it *has* to be an asymmetrical relation in favor of truckers and workers. 10-20? 10-10.

New York, New York

THE 'LIQUIDATION' OF ART: SELF-MANAGEMENT OR SELF-PROTECTION?

JASNA TIJARDOVIC

I would like to briefly discuss bow a "Socialist" institution, in this case the Student Cultural Center Gallery (Belgrade, Yugoslavia), has behaved politically towards art and politics.

In the beginning of 1971 when it was founded, the people running the gallery envisioned it as an open, public institution, which is to say as part of the public sector, not part of the private sector. (There are private galleries in Yugoslavia.) They did not want it to be only an exhibiting place for specialized art activities; they did not want its programs to be contemplative and idealistic. Their aim was to approach art, culture, and education in a more "universal" way. That is, they wanted to consider the Gallery programs in art, architecture and design in relation to the society as a whole. That is one of the reasons why the Gallery became political in its programs, showing, in that sense, a point of political consciousness.

This approach to problems/programs resulted from the organization of the Gallery itself, since it was based on cooperation between people who worked for the Gallery and people from the outside—artists, art historians, designers, students of philosophy, sociology, technical sciences. The Gallery was a place where everyone could decide on the programs together (though those working for the Gallery were paid for the programs, and those from the outside were not (with the exception of art materials)).

Since 1971 many one-person and group shows have been organized by a group of artists (Zoran Popovic, Rasa Todosijevic, Gergely Urkom—to mention those who have been pushing group activity), whose interest in art has been to go beyond the physical object. Thanks to this group of artists the Gallery became known, both here and in the West.

Since 1972 the Gallery and other divisions of the SCC have been organizing the APRIL MEETINGS (EXPANDED MEDIA) as an open competition devoted to experiments in the areas of art, film, theater, music, architecture and design. The aim of this manifestation was to overcome the classical limits of the specialized arts, and to widen the scope of expression and meaning. This manifestation above, all stimulated those who were not professionally dealing with art, in that independent creative activity was encouraged rather than copying the work of

"professionals". The social content of Expanded Media was meant to oppose certain established forms of consciousness. For this reason foreign artists and critics have been invited, in order to broaden the social base of consciousness. (Yugoslavia has suffered from isolation as much as imperialism; there had to be a trade-off.)

The interest of the Gallery in architecture and design reflected the attitude that art, as an expression of the individual, could not act widely, could not be socially useful, active, aimed at general social use. It was taken for granted that architecture and design could, to a great extent, be adapted to certain social processes—since they arc always devoted to the majority and not the minority. In other-words, architecture and design could reflect an objectively larger quantity, whereas art—due to the function it had been given, and which it had given itself—could reflect only quality and not quantity (thus limiting it to the minority).

The building and the interior design of the SCC cost a lot and used up many resources which might have gone to other programs. This is one reason why the Gallery has stressed architecture and design. That is, although the Gallery is part of the public sector and thus devoted to developing programs for the "majority", it seems hardly coincidental that this process dovetailed with its financial priorities. For at the same time the Gallery began to isolate certain artists, and sometimes art in general (particularly recently), as part of the "minority"; and in fact it began to use the programs of architecture, design, and Expanded Media as a weapon against art. The interest of the Gallery in the "majority" only became an interest in certain professionals. In other words, many of the programs which were originally intended to expand the social function of the Gallery and of art became a means of *stifling* this kind of expansion, as a form of self-protection.

The Gallery wants to be socially justified, which means it is not neutral. It wants to adapt to society, to the aim of this society—self-management. The same is true of certain artists/collaborators (of whom I am one): we too are devoted to self-management, and to socially useful work—but in the form of "art". Ww have been doing this kind of art for years. And part of our work has been devoted to criticizing how self-management has developed (or not developed) within the SCC—an action that threatens certain people employed by the SCC (we are not employed by it). When it is necessary to criticise are outside the Gallery—aide art, or intimist art, art which is second-hand Parisien or New York art—the force of the Gallery is provided by its artists/collaborators. But when criticism of the Gallery itself is in question, we have no power to develop self-management. The relationships ,within the Gallery are treated as unimportant (useless to talk about) because of its "positive" role towards society (the 'majority") as a whole. In fact, many activities of the Gallery give the impression that a lot is being changed, say in architecture and design, while those who make art (collaborators in the Gallery programs, but not employed by the Gallery) are standing still. In this sense, since we have few other outlets for our work in Yugoslavia, we have to adapt ourselves to the Gallery—and via the Gallery to society.

The point is, we find ourselves in somewhat the same relationship to the Gallery that the Gallery has to society. Those of us from the outside who help make up the programs (or have in the past) demand that the Gallcey finance us, i.e., that we take part on an equal footing in the distribution of resources. But the Gallery has difficulty helping us financially because it is not properly financed itself. So the Gallery competes with other cultural institutions for resources, considering its own programs socially useful and justified, but finds it unjustifiable that external artists/collaborators should demand such resources from the Gallery. It is obvious that the Gallery well understands that when some of its people/collaborators want to take the means of production into our own hands it is an affront to its authority, its interior hierarchy , formulas. To protect itself from this the Gallery has become a self-protective bureaucracy within a larger self-protective bureaucracy, the State), some people in the Gallery have begun to suggest the "liquidation" of art, the need to "transcend" art.

The term "transcendence" or "liquidation" is too imitative—it comes from politics. This is an unhealthy, masculine idea. It reveals the extent to which repressive forces are stored up and the extent to which they can appear as a distorted form—in this case the idea of "transcending" art remind me too much of the transcendence and liquidation of people. This idea was generated not because the dialectical/materialist nature of art had been discovered, it can only be explained by internal human relationships in this institution, by the internal struggles. Art (as a whole) is being disarmed because (certain) art questioned the bureaucratic, financial power of the SCC; essentially art isn't the issue at all.

The merit of the SCC Gallery lies in its (former) questioning of all gallery programs, in its critique of mythologized, metaphysical art/culture which is so strong in this country, and which reduces itself to hymns about itself, to living prisons of art/culture/people. This metaphysical art/culture, and those institutions where it is presented, did not achieve democracy, in the sense of aiding creativity. The Gallery, because it is in the social sector and not in the private, could have made possible the development of self-management within it, with equal possibilities for people to do what they can only do now independently. Instead an insane need was developed for people to justify their work and even their lives by utility to some definite group, and pressure was exerted by this institution for people to show the usefulness of their work related to changing demands of existing social forces (the super-structural status quo).

Human relationships within the social idea of self-management cannot be found outside of oneself or outside of the theoretical and practical circumstances that influence us. I am trying to say that I cannot find and develop this idea on the outside, imaginary level, but on the actual level where I am theoretically and practically located. This is what my cooperation with those on whom my local practice depends should be. Self-management was supposed to teach me to work and act independently—without fear; more free; free, without self-censorship.

We have been asked to work independently and to teach others to do so, but in the end it turned out that the institution was acting independently, looking for formulas, systems, authorities, It could not be any other way because the institution is only paying lip-service to its initial organization, that is, the notion of cooperation. It has opened its doors but it cannot go out of them—the people within it have become slaves to the pressure of their own creations. I can now understand why some art groups and many individuals in this country have stopped working, become silent, or chosen mysticism instead of activism.

Belgrade, Yugoslavia

BATHYSIDERODROMOPHOBIA

ROSS NEHER

I

"The whole trend of cubist researches led artists to paint paintings about painting. That explains why their works often look like exercises or definitions. In the last analysis it makes no difference whether one calls a radically cubist canvas abstract or concrete: it strives to be its own subject. *This is the meaning of 'self-reflexive'."*

—Roger Shattuck

One of the most enduring myths of modernism is the autonomy of art, that art can exist more or less on its own terms, free of external influence. Such a notion was born of the avant-garde's quest for a chimerical purity, a quest which led the artist, more and more, to purge art of its metaphoric (fictive) elements and to stress those properties or processes thought to be consonant with the essence of art. Art became self-reflexive, it turned in on itself, it became its own subject matter, in order to be distinguished from a twentieth century landscape which became progressively absurd and unreal. The advanced artist willingly perceived in self-reflexive art a reality more substantial and compelling than any to be found outside of the art context.

With the publication of *Art and Culture* in 1961 art became self-conscious. In cold print the mechanism of modernism was laid bare, its mysteries solved, and its raison d'etre spelled out. Historical urgency coupled with an acute visual logic to father a supremely convincing movement. An early Stella claims a physical and psychical coexistence with the spectator. It refers to nothing beyond itself, except to its location within modernism, and ostensibly manifests an honesty which was to be confused with truth. No one could argue with paintings which issued a priori disclaimers. I am what I am and can be no more than what I am—a hunk of stained cloth. The break with the past was clean and unsentimental. De Kooning still painted women but could not resolve his comers. Stella, who painted nothing, could and did. He designed paintings in which comers, as such, do not exist, and in which subject matter of any kind is absent. For unlike Abstract Expressionism, Formalism did not merely strive to be self-reflexive; it *was*.

It is not hyperbole to insist that an understanding of the advanced art of the past fifteen years is impossible without first understanding its utter self-reflexiveness. Essentially, the concept of self-reflexiveness posits that a work of art is a logical, closed system, in which each component of the work reciprocally reinforces the others. Kosuth's contention that "art operates on a logic,"[1] and Burnham's belief that 'all works of art conform to a basic linguistic unit, the sentence,"[2] may be translated to mean that in art a kind of circuit is set up which uses the spectator's consciousness as a conductor, the spectator therefore being a necessary adjunct to the work of art. Hence the early Stella is "completed" when the spectator closes the circuit by acknowledging the reciprocal relationship that exists between the shape of the support and the painted image.

Now self-reflexive art need not be so classically orchestrated as the above example. At its simplest level it can embrace a whole universe of mundane objects, if not the very

universe itself. Consider the Readymade. The Readymade is quintessentially self-reflexive by virtue of its reciprocal relationship with an institutionalized art context. The symbiotic give and take which exists between the object and art environment replenishes both, and the magic involved, so simple and automatic, contributes to the inscrutable character of the Readymade. Moreover, the overt concreteness of the object satisfies avant-gardism's insatiable appetite for the "real." Needless to say, Duchamp was the first to recognize this phenomenon, as well as the first to perceive the hermetic, self-reflexive structure of the art world.

But even Duchamp could not have envisioned the extent to which the art world would take seriously its own shenanigans. The respective announcements for the 1974 exhibitions of Robert Morris and Lynda Benglis have generally been accorded art status in the way they reinforce each other in an art world context.[3] In the dozen or so years since the "Pinstripe" paintings, the Morris-Benglis piece can be said to differ from a Stella in the self-reflexive sense only in degree. Whereas in the Stella one could "get it," i.e., conceptually complete the piece with only a cursory knowledge of formalist esthetics, an appreciation of the Morris-Benglis piece demanded of the spectator what amounted to a groupie sensibility. Among the prerequisites for understanding the piece (not the least of which was the legwork to the galleries to pick up the announcements) was a familiarity with the character and thrust of each artist's work: the fascist and macho implications of Morris', the feminine vulnerability of Benglis', and the night porterish implications of the posters themselves (he in S-M regalia, she seen naked from the rear, pants pulled down. below the knees). A knowledge of their collaboration in video tapes and in a series of pornographic polaroid photographs also helped. At any rate, the Morris-Benglis episode had the effect of underscoring the stale club house atmosphere hovering about the art world, as well as reducing criticism to the level of the gossip column.

To be sure, art world clannishness is not new. And there is little reason to believe that the patrons of the Café Guerbois behaved much differently from those who haunt the art bars today. But that's not the point. The point is that those who choose to exploit the dynamics of avant-gardism do so because they wish to ingratiate themselves into a system which cares as little about art as it does about the human condition. Whereas the early modernists can be forgiven for not fully understanding their role in society, we ourselves cannot. Acceptance of elitism, if it is acceptable at all, is possible only if there is a reasonable assurance that advanced artists are fulfilling their somewhat ambiguous calling of *serving* society, of creating the cultural symbols a society uses to define itself, or perhaps most importantly, of inventing modes of expression that can be instrumental in changing the consciousness of society. Obscurantism and difficulty need not be banished, if the obscurity and difficulty are the byproducts and reflections of the artist's difficulty of creating meaningful symbols in a complex and hostile world.[4] An understanding of modern art has always demanded a good deal of patience and sympathy, but one was willing to put up with modernism's arrogant posturing because it' was possible to devine some substance beneath the claptrap.

But the level of sophistication and intelligence needed to grasp recent advanced art is dismally low, indeed. Assuming we accept the self-reflexive structure of art, all that remains is to be privy to the information system of advanced art. It means ultimately disengaging oneself from the larger social context in order to fully participate in art world politics and intrigue. The art itself, what little there is of it, is merely there to confirm that the author has sufficiently respected the club rules by subscribing to self-reflexiveness.

A glance at the recent past may prove valuable here. All of the truly avant-garde movements of the 60's and 70's, Formalism, Minimalism, and Conceptualism, and 'their spin-offs, Serial art, Process art, and Body art, are self-reflexive.[5] Most of these movements are heavily "systems" oriented. It goes without saying that systems are, by their very nature, closed and self-referential, at least those which

eschew content and feign neutrality are, i.e. grid, set, and number systems. Indeed, the very word "piece" has come 'to denote a tidy pseudo-logical ordering of a certain sort, a kind of system. Furthermore, many of the works spawned by these movements share with the Readymade the distinction of being non art phenomena upon which the artist has conferred art status, with only slight modification. Acconci's penis becomes significant only when re-contextualized. As time passes, Judd's boxes look more and more like Readymades—things lifted from the urban landscape and transplanted to the gallery. The unquestioning subservience of final product to original, self-reflexive concept, unfettered by notions of spontaneity or improvization, ultimately binds seemingly disparate work together. As LeWitt defined Conceptual art, "All of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art."[6] The art is thus readily made, and art making becomes a foreordained conclusion. The artist is reduced to searching out self-reflexive paradigms that are easily translatable.

The inclusion of Formalism in this context stems from Greenberg's assertion that "a stretched or tacked-up canvas already exists as a picture—though not necessarily a successful one."[7] Since the basic constituents of pictorial art—flatness and the delimitation of flatness—are inherent in every painting before the painting is even begun, it follows that the art condition of painting exists before the painting does. The Formalist's job is to render explicitly that underlying condition. Quality, that Formalist shibboleth, refers to how well a work of art measures up to the Formalist dogma at any given time, as the criterion changes, supposedly to satisfy the fluctuating demands of "High Culture." Hence, what constitutes successful picture making one year may not the next, and the enterprising artist is forewarned to keep close tabs on the Formalist grapevine, lest he/she miss out on the "Next Inevitable Step." In this way the artist's creative options are severely circumscribed.

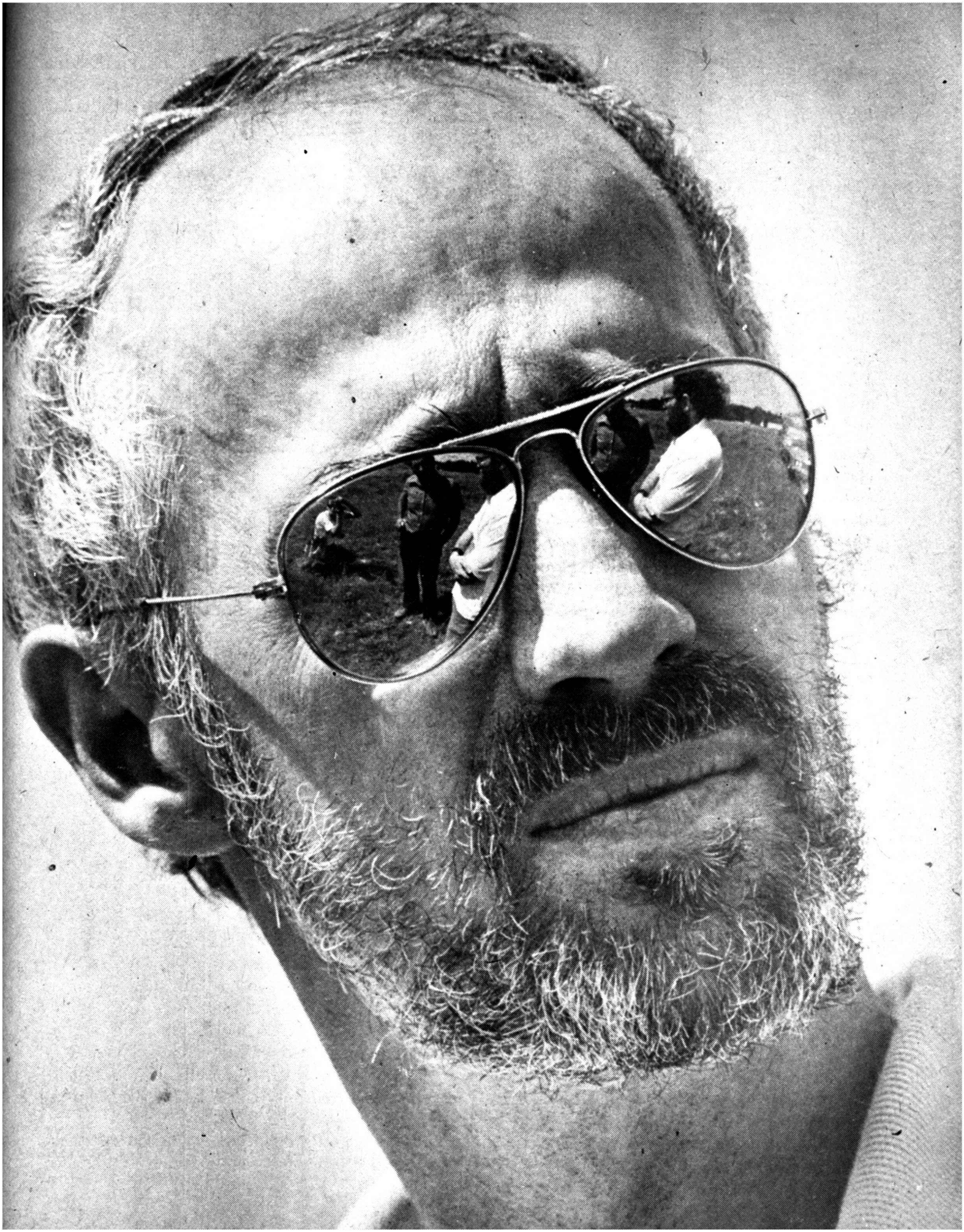
The Formalist's rejection of content is due not only to contempt for 'low class', content oriented kitsch, but but respect for the American ethos of efficiency.[8] Good painting or sculpture is not much more than good problem solving. Like many Conceptualist's, the quest for efficiency led Formalist devotees to reject distracting social or political issues, since such issues are inordinately complex and would fuck up their smooth running art machine. A recognition of the larger socio-political issues which govern esthetic issues could lead to a rejection of self-reflexiveness in favor of a looser, broader principle upon which to base an advanced art. An examination of the nature of function of art would entail asking not only "Of what should a work of art consist?" but also "What should a work of art DO?" The former question, from which Formalists and Conceptualists derive the respective answers "form" and "concept," cannot be asked until the latter has been answered.

A major function of a work of art is to serve as a cultural repository. As such, it is an abstraction or distillation of civilization; a synthesis of the various forces brought to bear upon the artist. Artistic invention is as vast as the imagination, but the imagination itself is tethered to a social context which it cannot transcend. Meaning in art is the direct product of this ironic situation. And we might add at this point that it makes little difference whether the artist consciously seeks to portray his/her social climate or prefers instead to concentrate on more specialised art concerns so long as he/she does not specifically exducle the outer world in doing so. For only when art is created in denial of the larger culture, under the illusion that art making is a pure activity, for an art world which has become totally insulated from the outer world, are the results disastrous and without meaning.

II

Perhaps there is some interwoven nature to the myth of America and the myth of modernism, and when both have been sufficiently unwoven the autonomy of art may be seen for what it is: one colored strand and part of a larger fabric.

—Joseph Kosuth



The trend to portray the various permutations of advanced art as cultural metaphors was lead to a critical climax with the publication of the now notorious December issue of *Artforum*. This has not been enthusiastically welcome in certain quarters, to say the very least. Opposition to the magazine's new editorial thrust is voiced most often and in the most vehement terms by those who have the most to lose from a shift in the art world power structure, i.e. the Formalists, who, already hurt by a recession, are not happy about their diminished influence upon "our leading modernist art journal."[9] At any rate, the Formalist's loss is the art community's gain, in that the framework of art has been expanded beyond the boundaries of the merely formal to encompass those factors (sexual, socio-political, economic) which affect our lives. A broadening of the meaning of art has the beneficial effect of affirming cultural unity, thus reducing the artist's sense of alienation and paving the way for an art in which social interdependence is acknowledged. It is with this in mind that the following interpretation of the past decade and a half of advanced art has been written.

By 1966 the escalated war in South East Asia and the rising tensions brought about by the civil rights movement, polarized the nation along political-generational lines. A similar polarization within the ranks of the avant-garde also occurred at this time. Here too, there was a split between conservative-establishment and liberal-radical.

It was in 1966 that conceptual art came into being. Kosuth described the conceptual artist at that time as being at "war … against Formalism's mindless estheticism."[10] Now the bitterest kind of conflict is a religious one, in which each warring faction is convinced of the moral superiority and primacy of its beliefs. The conviction and force with which Formalists and Conceptualists sought to persuade the art world, and by extension, art history, of their legitimate claim to the mainstream, could only have developed out of an extreme infatuation with essentialism. Proponents of each movement believed they, and only they, held the key to art. One is tempted to recall Agnew's remonstration to American youth in the early 70's that they did not have a patent on morality. As recent history has shown, no one has a patent on anything, much less on the essence of art.

When high mindedness becomes vogue we can be sure that less uplifting forces are at play. Sure enough, the megaton art rhetoric of the 60's and early 70's masked the nature of the avant-garde's internecine squabbles. Greenberg's unequivocal assertion that the avant-garde *belongs* to the ruling class,[11] that only they have the requisite wealth, education, and leisure time to possess, understand, and enjoy advanced art, tends to be overshadowed by the more controversial issue of morphology, though the two are inextricably wedded by virtue of Greenberg's rather quaint reading of social and art history, a reading which translates the struggle between the haves and have-nots into an esthetic struggle between form and content. True, the barely literate 19th century urban proletariat liked his kitsch well spiced with content, if for no other reason than to alleviate a wretched existence. But content is not the private preserve of the lowly and uneducated. Greenberg, a holdover from an era when machismo could make up for any lack of formal education, could hardly have foreseen a time when the masses would hold bachelor degrees. Nor could he have envisioned the young college trained artist of the 60's and early 70's, who, armed with a buckshot-like smattering of humanities courses, was ready to apply a spotty knowledge to anything and everything in sight. Sputnick, which' killed AE, would eventually kill Formalism. The very Cold War which gave AE its existential angst, fostered a space and education race that substantially neutralized paranoia and generated such programs as the Peace Core and Vista. In many ways, Formalism was the art world's NASA; expensive and expansive. But when we get right down to it, and if we forget for a moment its self-reflexiveness, Formalism is nothing more than Abstract Expressionism without balls, just as NASA is a military eunuch, and had to be gotten rid of once the vacuity of its position was perceived.

Up until the development of Conceptual art, Formalist painting straddled a minimalist

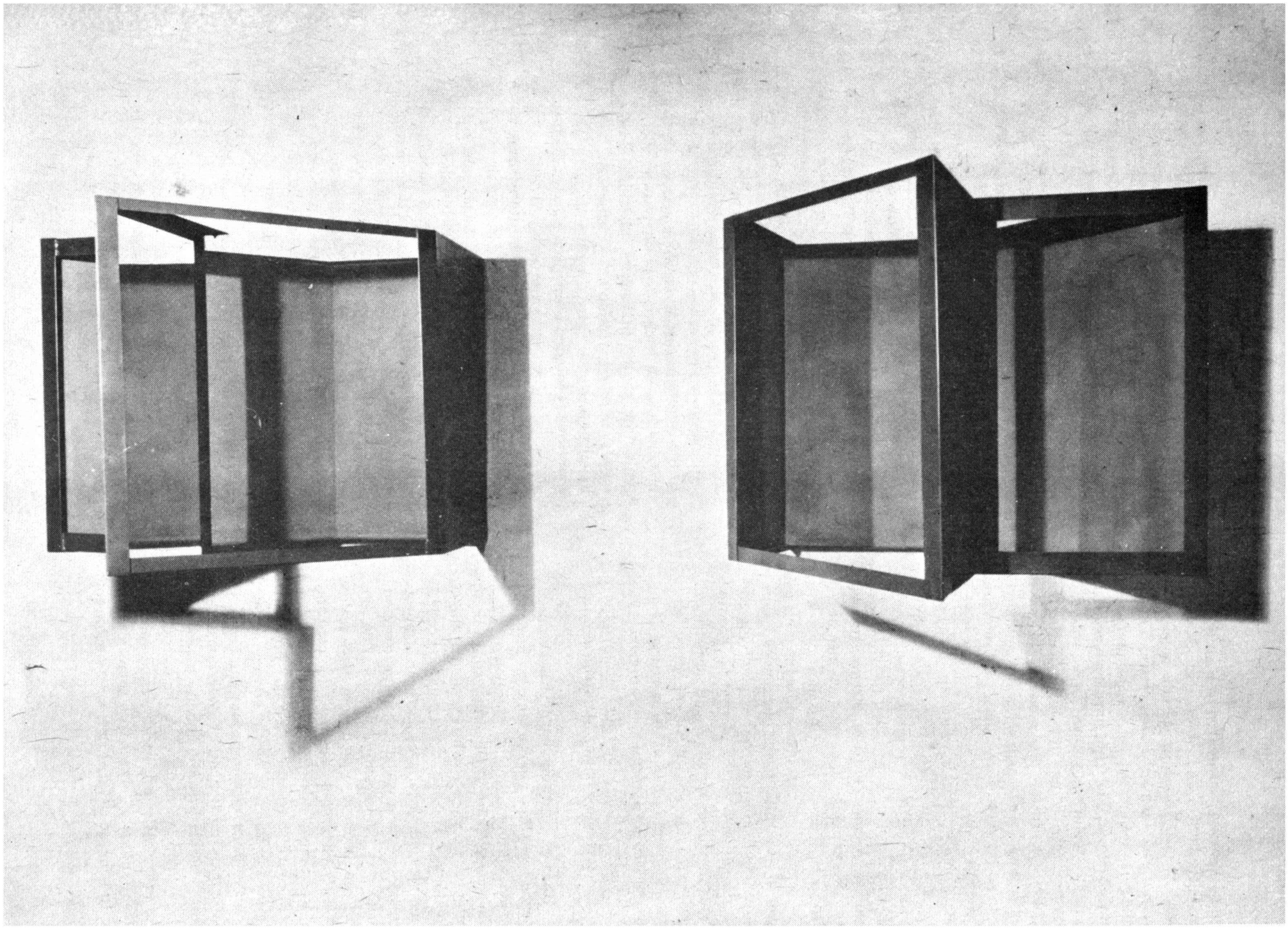
fence. Against the backdrop of a shoot-from-the-hips Abstract Expression, early Stella's, Noland's, and Poon's projected a cool intellectualism which rendered their class orientation somewhat ambiguous. During this period, the only artist that could not have been accused of intellectualism was Jules Olitski, who assumed a central position in the development of later Formalism. Olitski, always the out and out hedonist, was incapable of dissembling his motives. However, it remained for Conceptual art to force, albeit unconsciously, the issue of class affiliation. Within two years of the beginning of Conceptual art, Stella, Noland, and Poons had, shall we say, come out of the closet. All significantly changed their styles. The decorative element implicit in their early work was made explicit: Stella plunged into his "Protractor" series, surely his most decorative and "designy" to date. Noland refined his palate to the most tasteful pastel hues ever seen on canvas. Poons abandoned the underlying grid structure upon which he plotted the positions of his tiny elipses for a lush and saccharine lyrical expressionism. Olitski, of course, was light years ahead of all of them, giving us painting bearing such titles as *Intimacy*, 1965, *Thigh Smoke*, 1966, and culminating in the fleshy excess of a painting like *Radical Love*, 2,1972.

It is not surprising that Walter Darby Bannard sees Olitski in the same tradition as Watteau, although Boucher and Fragonard are more apt.[12] For in Olitski we find a boudoir painter par excellence, who excelled at the very same things Boucher and Fragonard excelled at: rich, glistening surfaces, Lethean atmospheres, facile textures, erotic coloration, and, perhaps most importantly, the evocation of a world completely detached from harsh reality.

As Boucher and Fragonard depicted and reinforced the exclusive mini-world of the French court, so too the "Rococo" Formalists attempted to function for the contemporary versions of Mme. de Pompadour and Louis XV. But whereas Boucher and Fragonard maintained personal contact with the nobility they served, Olitski and his group, through the restrictions of the self-reflexive art world, were divorced from any intimate contact with today's ruling class. In being so isolated they were unable to make any appreciable comment upon the world for which they were creating. The works of the Rococo Formalists, like the jewelry at Cartiers, are essentially anonymous commodities, well crafted objects born of theoretical urgency, but ultimately of scant cultural value.

It is impossible to tell to what extent the social ramifications of Formalist art were consciously perceived by either the Conceptualists or even the Formalists themselves. But it is likely that the social history of this country during the 60's and 70's played a major role in shaping the developments in advanced art. Impassioned by the ideological rhetoric of the day, in search of the 60's catchword "relevance," the young artist must have sensed in Olitski, Poons, and Stella, a gross amorality, must have viewed the glowing skeins of an Olitski or Poons painting as symbols for the smouldering ghetto and the napalmed peasant of South East Asia.

But Formalism was not alone in its abandonment of cultural responsibility. Conceptualism can be seen as the intellectual side of the communal life style which gripped the imaginations of thousands of the Woodstock generation. Conceptual artists, as esthetic dropouts, as mind-trippers on heady structural linguistics, in effect gave the finger to the traditionally minded Formalists who wielded phrases like "the tough conservatism of absolute high quality" or "authority with the conservative flavour."[13] The fascist ring of Formalism did not escape the Conceptualists. But like their prodigal counterparts of the 60's, they did not entirely free themselves from the system. Although they claimed to represent the opposite of the esthetic they despised, they nevertheless accepted the self-reflexive condition underlying advanced art. The tragedy of all this is that so little of significance was accomplished. The argument between Conceptualism and Formalism was academic at best. By narrowing activity to a single aspect of art, art became the real loser, In failing to question the underlying self-reflexive structure of advanced art, artists on both sides of the ideological fence perpetuated the isolation of modernist art and cut themselves off from the social pulse needed to give art its real power and strength. Adoption of a Kantian



methodology to set the limits of art, in order to make art "secure," [14] is as ruinous as it is rife with self-deception. Time might be better spent searching for the Loch Ness Monster. For as we are now learning, especially those of us who make our living in New York City, true security does not exist. Only by confronting that social reality will we be able to first envision and then create an art that is deep, rich, and humanly sustaining.

New York, New York

NOTES

1. Joseph Kosuth, "Art After Philosophy, I and II," *Studio International* (October and November, 1969), reprinted In *Idea Art,* ed. Gregory Bancock (New York: Dutton, 1973),p, 84,

2. Jack Burnham, "Problems of Criticism," *Artforum* 9 (January, 1971), reprinted in *Idea Art,* ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton, 1973), p. 60.

3. A more detailed account of the work of these two artists, including sections dealing with the announcements of their 1974 exhibitions may be found in Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, "Robert Morris: the Complication of Exhaustion," *Artforum* 13 (September 1974), pp, 44-49, and Robert Pincus-Witten, "Lynda Benglis: The Frozen Gesture," *Artforum* 13 (November 1974), pp. 54-59.

4. See Lucy Lippard's "Cult of the Direct and the Difficult," *Two Decades of American Painting* (New York: Museum of Modern Art), reprinted in Lucy R. Lippard, *Changing* (New York: Dutton, 1971), pp. 112-119. Admiration for so-called "difficult" art is particularly irksome, in that difficulty is mistaken for profundity. A cube, a grid, a white canvas, are no more profound, *in themselves,* than are nudes, landscapes, or still-life. One begins to be rather annoyed with those who insist upon running intellectual obstacle courses without first having any idea of the goal or purpose for doing so.

5. One hesitates to include Pop art in this category, if simply because it never generated the kind of argument Formalism or Conceptualism did; never, shall we say, dominated avant-gardism's center stage. One gets the impression that Pop art appeared too "impure," too complex, to be taken seriously by one dimensional ideologues. The exception is, of course, Warhol, whose Duchampian posturing entitles him to be labeled self-reflexive.

6. Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," *On Art,* ed. Gerd de Vries (Cologne: 1974), p. 176.

7. Clement Greenberg, "After Abstract Expressionism," *Art International* 6 (October 1962), p. 30.

8. Max Kozloff, "American Painting During the Cold War," *Artforum* 11 (May 1973), p. 54.

9. Hilton, Kramer, "Muddled Marxism Replaces Criticism at Artforum," *New York Times,* 21 December 1975, sec. 2, D40, Kramer is amusing. It's obvious that he's outlived his usefulness and ought to retire as gracefully as possible. Too bad there's not enough room for another restaurant reviewer on the staff of the *Times.*

10. See Joseph Kosuth's statement for his January, 1975 exhibition at Leo Castelli Gallery, reprinted in Joseph Kosuth, "The Artist as Anthropologist," *The Fox* (No. I, 1975), p. 30.

11. Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 5.

12. Walter Darby Bannard, "Quality, Style and Olitski," *Artforum* 11 (October 1972), p. 67.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *Art and Literature* (Spring 1965), reprinted in *The New Art,* ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton, 1973), pp. 67-68.

HAS YOUR LICENSE EXPIRED?

NIGEL LENDON

What is the nature of your work? What is its relation to other work?

Such questions reflect the dilemma currently engaging you artists seeking 'cultural change', as, for example in the New York forum *Artists Meeting for Cultural Change*. Has it been the professional characteristics of your work, (or rather, the work-role you've adopted) which has imposed limitations on the forms your social/cultural relations have been able to take? Or has an *a priori* self-identification *as artist* effectively precluded your potential for significant social/cultural change (regardless of reflexive illusions of change in your *sociality*—your 'social relations' with other artists).

It's indicative of the confusion of present circumstances that you artists are using the word 'work' to mean many things: the 'work' means either the object, the manifestation of concept, or the range of various activities of labour/production (from thinking … to making … to designing … to directing), or the comprehensive sense of *œuvre*, life-work.

What makes questions concerning the nature of your work 'awkward' is that you've evaded the recognition that the real nature of your work can only be revealed by its relation to *other work*. This lack of clarity is further compounded by your adoption of the label of artist as 'cultural worker', and concomitant 'notions of artists' identification with the working class.

1. Artist's work, 'creative' work, 'intellectual' work: why do we accept making art as more 'naturally' *work* than we do say, play, or speculation. (the traditional Aristotlean characteristics of *leisure)?* Making art has been professionalised and institutionalised to an historically unique degree, and as the distinguishing feature of High Culture it exists as an integral part of Capitalist superstructure. Its practice is highly valued as an index of individualism, and its products are used as vehicles of propaganda. These are certainly *work-like* functions (among others, like exchange-value speculation, and the reification of consumption). But it's also the 'normal', the street-level acceptance of art-work as work which has magnified its pervasive and socially inflexive effect.

We take for granted that play, and speculation (and recreation) fall within the realm of leisure. But we find that leisure has been professionalised and institutionalised to a similar degree, that it sits firmly as a massive speculative and entrepreneurial sector of capitalist economics, that its 'stars' are sanctified as cult-figures, and that they and their paradigmatic forms are used as pawns for international diplomacy. It is no coincidence. The factors of control are the same: If Art and Leisure are thus so markedly similar, why does the distinction between art-as-work, i.e. culture, and leisure-as-not-work persist?

2. There seem to be all *kinds* of leisure, inventive ways we find to use our spare time, capacities which *all* people have in common, and which in the case of artists has expanded to become their work-role. And further, it's argued that this 'heightening' of creative capacities forges the link between artists' work and the common experience of leisure.

There are some members of this society (the service and academic professions, the self-employed, 'housewives', artists, etc.) who have, it seems, a much greater control over

the use of their time than others and, one assumes, a correspondingly greater access to leisure. But does self-determination of work-time make a real difference? Even these self-determined individuals are subject to a universal clock-watching, the 'automatic' division of self into use-value equivalents. And when an individual's time is considered divisible into 'work' and 'free time' fractions, when the *value* of that free time is defined by its use-potential, (value *sold* in work, value *bought* in leisure) then the rationalisation of compensation for labour as freedom-in-leisure is a conspicuous fallacy. If this can be seen to be the case in advanced capitalist societies—even as a persuasive model for voluntary servitude—how is it that such a condition has become acceptable as a way of life, even 'the good life'? If we recognise that leisure, thus determined by the values of the labour market, has suffered a kind of devaluation in relation to its supposed (mythical) value, then the Dow Jones of artists' work (thus defined) has also dropped …

3. The myth of freedom-accessible-through-leisure is implicitly disseminated through schooling and social conditioning (enculturation): it is pervasive in liberal-bourgeois rationality, and is gratified/exploited by the 'leisure industry'. Hence the common acceptance of a monetary-equivalent for free time, and the (obviously) concomitant notion of the *consumption* of leisure.

The myth of freedom-accessible-in-culture is more elusive, having (supposedly) greater *intrinsic* (esoteric?) value: it's the *sophisticated* arm of the consciousness industry, being stratified and regulated in its upper reaches by those with vested economic interests or entrepreneurial expertise.

Underwriting the social power of leisure-culture institutions is the liberal view of the 'free individual' as the prime-agent and producer of items of cultural value. Which is precisely why in this society, where Liberty is an inalienable Right, when the quality of the moments of freedom enjoyed by any individual *is held to be in doubt,* that the sustinence of a Model Free Man can be seen to exert a necessary regulatory and reassuring (pacifying) force. It is the awareness of this (merely) symbolic role which artists play in the scenario of capitalist hegemony which is the source of their collective *angst.*

4. To go deeper: the distinctions maintained between 'leisure' and 'culture' are motivated primarily by the needs of two sections of this society: (i) the ruling class, who through its control of High Culture reproduces its power for its own imperialist ends, through its ownership of 'mass' culture implementing its hegemony over the bounds of freedom/consciousness (and its means of expression), and (ii) the needs of the petty-bourgeoisie, to demonstrate their ascension from mere consumption of leisure to the consumption of culture. When the manifest experience of these needs do not reinforce the class relations which obtain, the historical fragility of High Culture used as an instrument of class power becomes apparent. That is, its need to embody certain transcendental values is so that it continues to be gratifying to the petty-bourgeoisie and ruling class alike. While it appears that such disjunctions (the failure to reinforce class relations) do occur, and frequently, it is a measure of the effective superstructural function in the cultural sphere that these occurrences are mediated and smoothed, and that the control of the ruling class over the economic base is firmly maintained through its mystificatory manipulation of 'reality'.

(That artists *live within* these disjunctions of High Culture is indicative of their dislocation as an historically determined social section, separate from the real economic base. And let us recognise that the reflexive illusion of a base/superstructural Analysis of the cultural sphere giving credence to claims to identity with the productive base, *simply because* work in that sphere produces 'things', is ludicrous.)

5. We're hardened to the deterministic relationship between those petty-bourgeois aspirations which surface in the consumer's role in Culture, and its interpretative media-the *aides de camp* of the cultured elite. We're aware that they treasure their utopian models of the 'artist as honest worker'. But within a wider body of literature that takes an overtly ideologically informed critical relation to culture, one also finds ready advocacy for the no-

WHY WE ARE MORE INTERESTED IN YOU THAN YOUR ART-WORK

We are thrown together because the social organization of our labor doesn't match the real conditions of our social interchange. You want to work, you want your work to be integrated into the things you are working for. But how is it possible to discuss work when all the real issues coalesce around the social relations of working?

The social divisions of production generate social 'programs' which are self-perpetuating but not self-superseding. These mediate between (social) form and (social) content — between 'society' and us. Form logically underwrites 'society's' insurance policy. Form is 'society's' instrument for determining social meaning. So can we begin to leave culture out? Cultural meaning is just a superstructural manifestation of social form-as-content; cultural art forms are determined by their historical-embeddedness in the dominant social strata. There are no pure forms or neutral forms. The touted autonomy of forms is a function of dividing going-on into separate spheres, such as 'discourse' and 'action'.

So, how is it possible to go on? And, more complexly, how is it possible to learn-and-teach going-on without (i) giving our concrete tasks a programmatic character, or (ii) establishing the rules for correct consumption/appropriation of the products of our discourse-action complex?

For all of us, the bone of contention comes down to the nature of possible concrete tasks (projects). And, as importantly, our constructed relation to these tasks. We can't develop a shopping-list for the nature of 'good work'. That is asking the wrong question. But there is a programmatic relation which is possible — content that is necessary and correct. Form is merely the structure of response to a particular social event. There is no basis for a permanent relation to form. We have to treat form as strategic and forget about it in order to get to a point of talking about correct content.

The celebration of 'plurality' of cultural forms is just liberal diversification/diversion of the worst kind. It is the base of control — plurality never means democracy but hierarchy — the ontological regimentation of 'contents'. We have to see it clearly as a problem of reproduction, not of reflection. What is the use if the product reflects a socialist awareness but reproduces the form of capitalism? Form fixes content.

Our ideological space is shot through with historically embedded cultural disarray. If we look at the work we do as constituting historically linked, continuous points of reference that index onto all our theories and practices and index us into 'progress', 'imagination' and 'creativity', then our relationships will revolve around work and will be externalized, self-mirroring shopping-list reality.

In contrast, our social interchange engenders the ideological space for dialectical work but — this dialectical work is not art. Our revolutionized social relations are not subject-matter of 'revolutionary formalizations'.

(position paper presented by Ian Burn and Mayo Thompson to Artists Meeting for Cultural Change, December 21st, 1975)

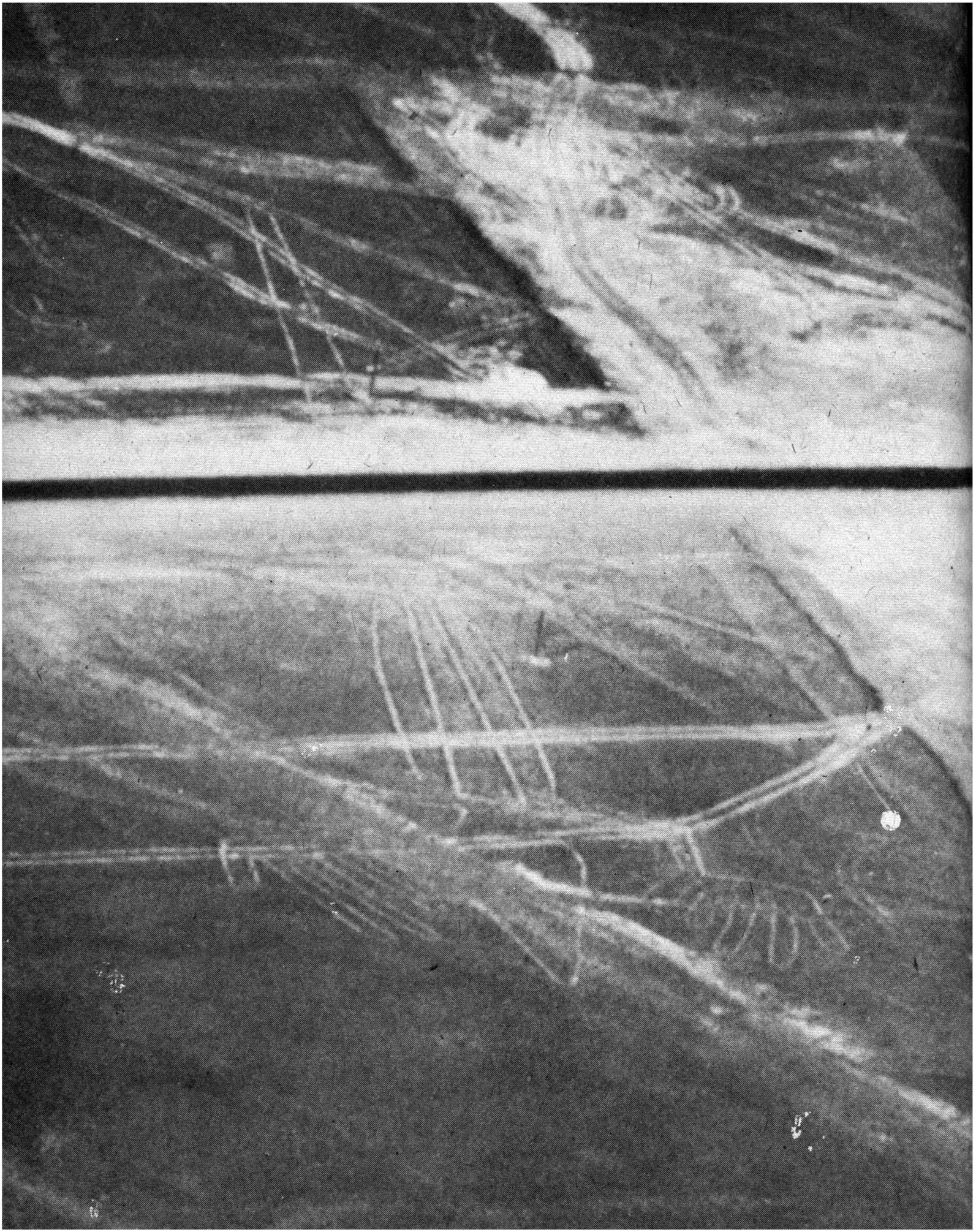
tion of the artist as the model free man.

Harold Rosenberg stretches a point to ascribe the idea to Marx: "The artist is the only figure in this society who is able *not to be alienated*, because he works directly with the materials of his own experience and transforms them. Marx therefore conceives the artist as the model free man of the future". *(Discovering the Present*, University of Chicago Press, 1973, p. 19). Marx's early conception of communism has been read as being fundamentally *aesthetic* in character, via the process of *disalienation*, wherein "the rich man profoundly endowed of all his senses … is simultaneously the human being in need of a totality of human life-activities", *(Marx and Engels: Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of* 1844). From this quotation, R. C. Tucker is lead to conclude: "In Marx's view, the relationship of the new man to nature—that is to his own anthropological nature—will be that of the artist". (R.c. Tucker: *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, Cambridge University Press, 1961, p. 158).

So there it is, you're getting it both ways, as Sunday worker and weekday artist. and it becomes all too easy to see this kind of wishful attribution as your *real nature*. "Ah yes, that's us, the *real* working class"!

It becomes necessary to ask: *whose* artist, *whose* class? And where, as the perpetrators of the distinction between culture and leisure, between expensive and free creativity, and the latter's total devaluation via 'mass' culture, must artists owe their allegiance and social responsibility? Artistic license, poetic license, class license … perhaps it's time to check whether it's about to expire …

New York, New York



WORK

JOSEPH KOSUTH

PART I

" … Schleiermacher had in mind the circular process of understanding itself, in which we read the parts in the light of the whole, but cannot presumably know the whole at all until we have read all the parts; in which we understand the individual words against the background of a projected sentence which will, however, not be complete until we have finished reading each of the words one by one. The same circle (or spiral) holds, it seems to me, for our comprehension of the past. No doubt, the degree to which we can have a vivid sense of the great struggles of the past, and of the social conflict from which the greatest works have emerged, is directly proportionate to our own personal experience of just such conflicts in the present. So the political struggles of the last decade have renewed our understanding of the past as well, and caused us to see in a new light many of these masterpieces of the past which for an apolitical generation had been felt as mere art objects or formal constructions …"[1]

"The desire to place history among the sciences sprang, Croce believes, from two false beliefs; that all knowledge had to be scientific knowledge and that art was not a mode of cognition but merely a stimulant to the senses or, conversely, a narcotic. To straighten out the matter, it was necessary only to show that art was nonconceptual knowledge of the world, *knowledge of the world in its particularity and its concreteness, to point to the fact that history was a similar kind of knowledge of the world, and then to distinguish history from art in general on the basis of the* content *of their representations."*[2]

If we are ever to transform our present social and cultural reality we will do so through a process of mediation *from* our present arena of work/life, and conscious struggle toward another. Only through artistic critical *practice* in the working out of the prcmises of our present art can we, beginning as artists, consider the meaning of our work in terms of (1) a mystification and fetishization of institutionalized symbols, to (2) understanding such symbols as commodity objects that rationalise present day reality by rarifying and glorifying—and thereby serving—the existing power structure (whose existence stands between us and the possibility of a society in which our work would mean something), to (3) through the process of forming cultural conceptualizations make explicit Our implicit ethnologic: the making culturally concrete of 'philosophic' belief languages and seeing them, as art, as actual pivots of mediation. It must constitute a critique in order to avoid annexation by a day to day language which must make a process a product in order to give it 'meaning'. Our understanding is one which can see the mechanisms of art-making as a sub-structural continual human historiography, an historiography which transcends the capitalist scientism of 'Official History' and its subsequent organization of reality—a reality for which the 'best' of our work, by

being so, reveals more than we wish to know of our age. How can we begin *here*, without reverting to mimicking work which was concrete and real for *another* time? Creative work now demands 'self-predictive' cultural/criticism historically anchored to a radical understanding of artistic functioning in the form of models made culturally concrete. The road to social and cultural reintegration begins with the attempt to practice positive work within the scope (and that means daily life) of one's own specific historical location. For the living, the *means* is a perpetual 'end'. That means is the process of mediating reality through work, and it is in artistic practice that the language of the belief-system can function as both homology and reality itself—though it is the role of the radical artist to push cultural consciousness by making reality 'visible' through homology rather than participating in evolving homologies that *constitute* reality, which led to and is typified by modernism. Such a direction, which Walter Benjamin suggests is the esthetizing of reality (as under Fascism) is understandable for a civilization whose religious motor is scientific progressivism in the form of consumptive capitalism. It is dependent on an abstract and artificial world where culture isn't concretised experience (and under the control of all those specific humans having the experience) but one which is technological theater: mass hypnosis under which behavior is controlled and pockets are picked.

The perspective of one's unique historical situation is organized from the location of one's work-that is how in a *healthy* society one is connected meaningfully with other humans. 'Political' activity unconcretized thusly is idealist dilettantism, regardless of the force or piousness of the 'activist'. Work can respond to and mediate the ethnologic of this civilization in ways which do not re-inforce and perpetuate the socio-cultural status quo. This is one understanding necessary for new work. Another is that in modernist art, unlike science. an illustration has also always been a 'test' because it was operationally capable of being 'meaningful' within the belief system of art *a priori.* The present state of contradiction has come about because our cultural/social world is no longer anchored to the concrete reality of the time and space of our lives, but rather our lives are indexed (for meaning) to an overly enculturated, technologically fabricated media life-world. Thus, our world has become a 'theater', and like any theater it is produced and directed. Works of art are now stage props and no longer real. 'Creative work' in art—a continuation of the questioning of the *nature* of art-consists of attempting to make this transparent 'theater' (taken as neutral and natural) opaque and visible. This theater calls such work 'political'.'Successful' work is no longer creative because it isn't questioning ing this reality, but accepting and refining it. Work must be that which is intended to 'fail' and in its failing resists being 'meaningful' to bourgeois society *(within that consciousness)* while still creatively articulating and making explicit the ethnologic of this civilization, a structure which by necessity must be exposed, for only with such an exposure can a truly new society culturally (and socially) evolve.

Making our ethnologic explicit in art will begin with an understanding that form is content, though certainly not in the usual sense that that is meant. The conscious and temporal aspects of artistic choice can be considered 'form', the unconscious and cultural rationale of the work its 'content'. But when the formalization of 'content' occurs from unconscious adaptation and 'analysis' it constitutes an exposed dimension of our 'ethnologic'; though only momentarily: the spiralling nature of the social dynamic is such that 'understanding' re-establishes that 'content' as 'form'—and on and on the process goes. A market-dependent and oriented culture invests in static conceptualizations (at any given moment the 'formalism' of art) since the generalization we call culture is only accessible to the market as a frozen moment rather than as a dynamic human process uncontrollable and open to everyone. We no longer make art, we make culture directly. The result of the commodification of culture in capitalist society is that the false consciousness of the 'market reality' has converted this 'symbolic crust' of historically imbedded social relations into a dead and artificial mechanism susceptible to control. Art is thereby separated from its deeply human historical base. In 'primitive' society,

by contrast, history is 'lived' through human (and natural) inter-connectedness, not simply printed and politically commodified. A program for future activist cultural work would seem to be two-fold: (1) the making opaque of such transparent mechanisms as well as (2) a self-reflexive analysis of the epistemic base ('the making explicit of the implicit ethnologic') implied by the practice of the former, while at the same time that former practice must constitute a 'self-reflexive analysis' of the latter. Both are 'practice' and both are 'theory'; and their fusion could in part constitute the kind of motor necessary for a radical evolution out of capitalist cultural consciousness.

PART 2

"Someone who does not care about real change betrays both art and change. But he who gives up art as something supposedly bourgeois falls into a bad state of affairs, that is: he is reactionary in the real sense of the word."—Herbert Marcuse[3]

To have an interest in art, and an interest in the people interested in art, doesn't itself necessarily condemn one as a 'bourgeois reactionary'. And one must question the motivations of anyone that maintains so. A consciousness of one's social section and the desire to transform it isn't the same as glorifying the *status quo,* though it must be work imbedded. Wholesale dismissals of a social activity simply because of its current bourgeois formalization is usually the position of those whose relationship to the social dimension (if not *all* dimensions) of the activity is either highly problematical or non-existent. (To suggest that that might be the case regardless of *what* society they found themselves in, would be unhistorical and non-dialectical, as tempted as one is to suggest it).

In many ways the history of *The Fox* is a public travelogue of the re-education of a group of artists, their evolution out of a consciousness another consciousness calls 'bourgeois', and, at this point, their arrival at a juncture where the basis of their socializing activity—'going on'—is split and sub-divided.[4]

Some have made a 'choice'. They see the marxist-leninist path as the 'correct' one and see 'the history of libertarian socialism and what some of us consider the need of *our* establishing a revolutionary *and* evolutionary methodology for social and cultural transformation as a 'diversion'. They see the aims of the feminist movement in terms eclipsed by their programs; they don't understand the necessity of embracing Marx's goals and avoiding Lenin's practice. They haven't learned that the attempt at applying the *theory* of practice from the classics to 'our situation' is a poor substitute for seizing the opportunities for change as they exist already *within* our situation, and feminism is a case in point. The issues of feminism are profoundly transformatory, they're here now, and they're having an increased effect. Only a religious mind rejects such 'opportunism'.

Those that have made a 'choice' want others to make the *same* choice—thereby facilitating the auspices of the group as an ideological tool. The form that consolidation of power takes is always similar, regardless of the ideological justifications used. Experience tells

us that 'means' *does* become the lived reality; but I'm willing to let others learn from their mistakes as well. 'Going on' is *still* the question, and our confusion is seen by some as a demand for 'organization'. The question is seen as *simply* political, thereby necessitating direct political activity with the working class. This categorical fetishization, for it is that—'politics' *(and* the 'working class') being as easily a candidate as art—sees everything else as a shadow. Perhaps I will deserve being criticized for saying so, but the recent gushing pace of 'radicalization' is in part due to the fact it is only an intellectualization, 'in the air' as position-taking, and not brought down to a real level; the radical re-evaluation of the basis of work. Instead, old habits continue. Group (and an arbitrary one at that) momentum is seen as a priority over the establishment of a living, working and learning situation that could have a *real* effect by being *community oriented.* The alternative has meant a return to the isolated pious and elitist club, with a social style and force virtually indistinguishable from the group's early seventies position, regardless of the fact that Wittgenstein has been replaced by Lenin. One of the surface changes has meant a shift from 'bourgeois artists' to 'revolutionaries', but the forms it takes (in terms of psychological need) reveals it as *art* historical, avant-gardist thinking. What we're stuck with now is hard-lining as a new kind of paint.

One problem arising from the ideological desert of American education is that in the reawakening that is part of the process of a genuine study of the social, political, and cultural processes that have formed us, is that everyone—working class and middle—is susceptable to being blinded by the sheer power of the clarity and sense of purpose of revolutionaries such as Marx, Lenin, and Mao. For those located in the emptiness of American Society without an historical embeddedness and sense of purpose of their own, nor the capacity to overcome the tremendous difficulties in creating such a space, the tendency all too often is to feel that one has found the 'answer'. How typical of our western (and that means scientistic and messianic) mentality to stop the process of education and 'choose'. The point isn't to *choose* (and we must remain suspicious of programs which insist on simplistic choices) it is to *learn,* and attempt to apply what one has learned to *one's own historical situation.* Many Marxist-Leninists in America are so preoccupied with making Holy Writ relevant to our situation (and as one might imagine it's a full time job) that they have lost touch with. what 'our situation' is. Isolated from the day-to-day reality of socially connected work, the professional revolutionary instead enters another psychological space which consists of intercine position-taking on Holy Writ interpretations, fueled by revolutionary careerism and greased with romance. Unless one sees social transformation occurring in *this* world by introducing it into one's work and by extension one's social relations, it is academic by any standards-even if accompanied by the usual 19th century assumptions about revolution, which in 'our situation' comes off as macho provocation. In some sense Leninism has *served capitalism* in its role as an ideological 'boogeyman' thereby thwarting real social and cultural *transformation*—as the military-industrial complexes on both sides of 'detente' show us: wc are fighting a mentality as much as anything else. We new to begin to realize that the 'left-right' mapping of the. political spectrum hasn't set out for all time and encompassed for all people what must be done to make this world livable. If change comes, and I believe it must, it won't be in the male fantasy characterisation (cops n' robbers, cowboys n' indians) of 'revolutionary science ; unless one sees countries like the Soviet Union as a 'change'. The 'ends' of Leninism has been its *means:* authoritarianism. What you see in that country, and in other countries, is the direct result of Leninist methodology. In our fight against capitalism, a fight which is historically just and absolutely necessary for the preservation of humanity, we might fight with *equal* vigor against the anti-humanism that capitalism has bred on the left.

Our reality is located in our work, whatever our work is, and conversations which begin with other priorities and Schemas seem ultimately to be abstract, procrastinating and safe. Given the multiplicity of revolutionary 'game plans' (and the uncompromising formal-

istic methodology of most of them) at what point does one begin to see the professional revolutionary's insistence that his or her way is the *only* way for social change, as being an impediment to *real* change?[5] The activity of the former, insofar as it isn't anchored within the fabric of society, can be self-justificatory, amoral, and 'group solipsistic'—as anyone that has had contact with those 'possessed' (politically or religiously) will attest. Revolution as a professional niche which isn't mediated through a meaningful anchoring, within the social rwalitv (work) become'i idealistic, elitist, messianic, and finally *unreal.* Constructions such as a 'Vanguard party' are perhaps attempts to legitimatize the niche with the aura of qua-si-work. (Unfortunately, idealist pragmatizing and work are not the same.) Political issues must be contextualized within the historically human social continuity of work, and this begins *for us* by asking questions, such as: if I like neither the way nor the meaning of my work, why is this and what can I do about it?

New York, New York

NOTES

1. Quoted from the Introduction to *Marxist Esthetics* (Henri Arvon) by Frederic Jameson, Cornell University Press, 1973.

2. Quoted from *Metahistory* by Hayden White, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1973.

3. Herbert Marcuse at a Symposium, Cologne, 1972.

4. This issue of *The Fox* is a collaborative effort by *at least* two groups. It contains material I can in no way support—and I know that of course I'm not alone, probably *no one* supports everything that is between these covers. One justification for the publishing of some of it might be the 'educational' role of *The Fox*, allowing for negative as well as positive examples to learn from.

5. This isn't intended as an indictment against all 'professional revolutionaries', certain historical situations demand them, to be sure. The question I'm raising is what will bring about social and cultural transformation in *our situation* in a way which is radical, because it is real; and as artists, what is our role in that transformation?

METHOD OR MOUTHTALK?

FERN TIGER & EDWARD ROBBINS

It is important to be aware of the means by which artists have been manipulated as well as the means by which they attempt to manipulate the commonly held myths about art and the external social and political forces that shape art. Without such conscious realization, the artist remains a pawn of those who dictate their role in the system while they themselves become dictators of the cultural forms of a society for the purposes of investment and posterity. This discourse should serve as a base for the rerouting of artistic practice in human affairs.

In our dialogue we have attempted to raise important issues in the form of an argument; the argument to be pursued and amended as we learn more about how to understand the problem of art. While not covered in this short paper, it might be noted *mutatis mutandis* that similar problems exist in the social sciences. At this point, the article has different voices, the problem of the different backgrounds of the participants.[1]

WHAT IS ART?

In a way, this question is both central and at the same time potentially misleading. As a cultural or social category defining a status or merit, it defines the limits of acceptable 'Art' in our society. As a guide to an understanding of human expression, it can in various guises mask the myriad forms that such expressions take. Given that all definitions essentially imply limits, it is essential that the question of 'what art is' not be reduced to formal or logical examinations of any set of arbitrary diacritica. For us, the question implies that 'art' is not necessarily a category or simply a thing but an activity rooted in its social context and circumstances. Instead of attempting to locate a meaning or use of a word or concept outside of a practice, what seems important is to emphasize the *activity* rather than the result. Only when seen as a socially rooted activity will we be addressing all the richness that diversity in performance brings to any given form of human expression.

It is tempting to engage the problem as formmalist critics and aesthetic philosophers. For them, if it is not entirely clear 'what art is', it is eminently clear 'what is art'. Essentially the problem of defining art is reduced to a methodology of mouthtalk2 where it is not so much what is said but who is saying it. The definition of 'what art is' becomes not so much an attempt to describe and understand an important (and universal) domain of human activity but a form of bestowing status in which the problem of human expression is mystified.

Critics and philosophers have led us to believe that the value of an artwork comes from its potential to evoke emotion, to exhibit aesthetic qualities, or to portray a reality. At the same time, these critics define art as autonomous, with a meta-language of its own.[3] By a combination of these attributes, a form of expression and its product can thus be labelled 'art'. Art by this definition is alienated from its sociology4 and from its context. What become important are the formal elements purified of their meaning, their context and their roots. Supposedly, we are left with the pure 'artistic' experience. By the use of such a formal, unspecified, and essentially unrooted language, critics and those who control the arts can arbitrarily define what is and is not 'art', which is why they know 'what is art' and not 'what art is'.

Yet, the problem remains how we know something is 'art'? By reducing the definition of 'art' to a formal meta-language, things and their underlying social activity are separated by an artificial set of categories. In fact, critical to those who use such a meta-language in evaluating a work of art is their supposed neutrality in terms of the very social process by which either the art or these critical standards are produced. Effectively, formal standards are deemed to have more intellectual clarity and force, precisely because they are without social content. Standards without any social referrent by which they can be tested arc *ipso facto*, arbitrary. What we are being told implicitly is that the very strength of formalist standards lies in their arbitrary nature. The idea that art is an autonomous form, bound by a traditional meta-language, is a misleading dogma which contributes to the proliferation of esoteric formalisms, empty of meaningful content; a definition without parameters. As a guide to understanding human phenomena, it should be absurd. It tells us neither how we can know intersubjectively what 'art' is or where it begins and ends. As a result, critics can seriously argue about the status as art of the Brillo boxes that Andy Warhol silk screened; or they can feel it is necessary to be polled to decide whether Watts Tower even deserves the sobriquet 'folk art'. It would be laughable if it were not for its insidiousness. How these works have been used, what meaning they have for various groups of people and why critics are chosen to be judges goes unquestioned.

By defining 'art' in this way, the art work is removed, alienated and isolated from its process, its effect and ultimately its power. Art, through its associations with such notions must, by the force of the argument, become primarily concerned with art-as-art, not as activity. Art is thus isolated, alienated and as such becomes capable of either pure formalisms (Stella) or expressions of this alienation (deKooning). As such it is embraced as pure and cleansed but, as Barthes points out,5 powerless. Its concerns become the world of art, its goal, autonomy. Work is defined as 'for its own sake'; more important, the formal definition not only delineates a cognitive domain, it creates its own sociology. By creating pure standards, the formalist creates a pure sociology. Something must tell the formalist a product is 'art'. If it is not in terms of what *is,* it must be rooted in *who* says it is, or *where* it is. The context is defined (although never stated) and that is what makes it art. The *illusion* of autonomy creates the actuality of a bondage rooted in mystification. For example, rarely, if ever, is a work of art discussed in terms of its cash value. But there is a covert relationship between that which is praised for its uniqueness and the obvious marketability implied therein. If artists must live and eat and they must do 'art' to survive, is there any wonder about the emphasis on esoterica, uniqueness, 'avant-chic'? What 'art' becomes in such a situation is what 'art' is today, the plaything of those who control society; a product for the ruling class. Such definitions by removing art from its activity, create the very hegemony that artists yearn to escape: while substituting a status over which neither artists nor their products have any control.

Given these problems it becomes essential to ask, do we emphasize the 'thing' or the totality of the human activity involved? For us, it seems essential to begin with the latter, if only because art is activity rooted in a sociology even if defined formally. Art cannot escape history, nor the complex relations in which it finds itself. It can be denied that such relations exist, and the illusion of autonomy created, but as we have argued, only at the cost of mystification and the loss of meaning mystification connotes. It is true for art as it *is* for all things.

If formalist definitions have failed to accurately delineate the study of art, how should such a study be defined? Certainly it is not with distinctions which define the art of one group as 'art' and another as commercial, folk, or non-art. Decisions about art should be based on the particular role the activity plays in human expression, its particular domain as metaphor and expression in a bounded form. This necessitates at least two dimensions to begin with. First, as expression, as form, art is a relation to human labor and creation, i.e. its history. Second, art is a social activity, rooted in language and, as all language, rooted in its social conditions. It is a *thing-in-relation.* A

discussion of 'what art is' is also about 'how art is', 'why art is' as part of the process by which we create our world and are created by it.

Art cannot be understood as a problem *sui generis*. The problem is part of the understanding of all human activity but like all human activity has its particular domains. As a result, art must be understood as a part of all cultures and groups with a diversity of forms, functions, places and roles. Its study must encompass all its forms whether valued or not; its meaning and success based on its sociology and not purely its formal characteristics. It is neither context-free nor independent. It is one of many human activities and, like all activities, must be understood in its relations to all human activity.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN ARTISTIC ENTERPRISE?

What distinguishes one activity from another such that one is deemed 'worthy' of preservation and another ignored appears to be a question of the standards by which that activity is judged and the qualifications of the person(s) doing the judging. In a capitalist system it seems obvious that some activities (or their results) are considered more 'valuable'—in a market sense—than others. Bricklayers may produce numerous exciting relationships when arranging bricks, the form of which may appear similar to minimal sculpture of the 60's, yet they never sell their work on those grounds (be the price more or less than that of the minimal sculptor). Nor do we appear to confuse the two works. What then differentiates the two if in fact their end products are visually similar? If the mason were to locate the bricks at the Guggenheim, the product would be considered art. It must have been a curious sight for a tile layer to see Carl Andre's metal squares, similar in size and location to the real flooring already installed at the Whitney or the Modern, or the electrician's amazement over any excitement generated by Flavin's fluorescent tubes. Without its"special context and the entourage of people who fabricate an evaluation it's just a floor or a light fixture, not art. Art is more than its end product. If the products appear similar and yet society proclaims differences with regard to value, preservation, reverence, etc. then we must look elsewhere for the rationale behind that distinction. A brief review of the processes seems in order. For such an analysis we might sketch two scenarios; 1) a retired salesman who diligently paints from a photo of an urban street, and 2) Richard Estes depicting a downtown street. How do we differentiate Richard Estes from the salesman? Also, how do we differentiate Estes, the illustrator, from Estes, the painter? Both Estes and our salesman apply paint to a canvas in an effort to portray a prearranged subject. Are the two activities the same? Is only the status of the final product different? If we assume that the answer to the first question is 'yes', then we are left with the assumption that the determinants of what is and what is not art are based on some set of arbitrary, formal criteria. What differentiates the products are a measure of worth, not a delineation of the processes involved, ie. a subjective evaluation. What remains unanswered is why we can distinguish Duchamp's typewriter from another typewriter, or a Campbell's soup can from *the* Campbell's soup can. Are the works of earth artists really unlike the jobs done by the Army Corps of Engineers? Both forms idolize man's ability to shape the environment to place a formal imprint by man on nature—an homage to man's ability to change the natural ecology. Both leave unquestioned the social cost of such domination. Now, if the end product appears to be like other processes—how do we determine an artistic enterprise from one that is not? Formalist critics and even radical artists solve this problem by applying credibility to the context through which the activity of 'art' is performed and exhibited ie. galleries and museums and the network of people who comprise the art system. Effectively, what makes one art and one not art is the definition which makes the distinction and the particular socio-political relationships which give these formalist definitions their credibility. The problem of what is art is reduced to the problem of *who controls its definition*, not what it is as a set of parallel human activities. In the above examples, artistic expression is present in all the products described. Artistic *status-which* is not art—is ascribed to only some. A study of art and the attempt to understand

it as a human activity is thereby mystified. What we are directed to is a study of only particular forms. As a result, the study of art becomes fetishized and self-perpetuating. What we should be studying in our attempt to understand art is 1) art as a set of paralled activities with different forms and contents, 2) the social system which underlies any definition of art.

If we are to accept the need for a contextual base, in which to root a definition of art, the artistic activity must be seen in relation to its social imbeddedness and the particulars of given groups. However, the activities are not only social. They manifest themselves in metaphorical languages which necessitate levels of comprehension based on the same prerequisites as other languages. Essentially the study of art cannot be removed from its sociology. What needs to be understood are the diverse means art has used to realize a structuring of the world in metaphorical form.

In order to take advantage of such diversity of forms and contents which art is both capable of and has produced, those concerned with understanding art must become conscious of: 1) how social/political and economic forces shape art, 2) how artists' biases affect the shape of art, 3) how the general public has been and can be involved in the process of art, 4) how art is organized as a social and political phenomena, 5) how various definitions of art affect its role and 6) how art is and may be rooted in social activity. (Does it have to be for-its-own sake?) While these are only some of the questions that must be answered, it seems clear that any understanding of art must be historical, cultural and social.

SHOULD ART BE DEFINED BY ITS END PRODUCT?

The socially-learned definition of art as a "product of beauty, implying a personal, unanalyzable creative force that transmits and raises the art (object) beyond a skill …",6 has resulted in the promulgation of a myth. The notion that the artist creates mysteriously, in isolation, alienated from the larger culture has furthered the already problematic gap between the art activity and the larger population. This gap is the result of the basic structure of our social and political institutions which force the art activity to be patronized and its products to be captured by the wealthy. The problems resulting from a definition which sees art as an end product manifest themselves strongly when we become aware of the means by which the exhibition of such products as products in galleries and museums transform the art activity from a potentially genuine cultural effort into an elitist endeavor whose products are viewed and eventually possessed by only a small portion of the culture. A decision to study the art activity through its residue in the form of end products reduces and narrows the real potential to see artists as people, citizens of a culture, who for whatever peculiar reasons employ metaphorical languages in order to expose the attitudes, criticisms of contradictions of a particular view of reality at any given time.

Indeed artists get side-tracked, first through restrictive education and later through the efforts of the power structure to view art works as valuable entities whose existence is independent of other things, acts, events. When an art work is viewed in a larger context, the emphasis automatically shifts from the artist's personal conception of reality as manifested primarily in a product (event) as an end in itself to an investigation of those forces which shape the artists' views of reality. Further, by transforming art from a product to an activity, the importance of standards which define the products as art lose their force. All things as relations to metaphorical expression in a bounded form become a part of art no matter what their use or final location may be. By removing art from its definition as product the concern becomes more what it means and what it does rather than what it is.

HAS ART ALWAYS BEEN A FUNCTIONARY OF THE POWER STRUCTURE?

The problem is essentially historical but at the same time a function of the definition we assign to the category 'art'. Historically, not all societies have had power structures. In fact, throughout most of human history societies have had neither classes based on differential access to production and resources nor a cultural system based on the hegemony

of one class or social system over other classes or systems. Band and tribal societies are defined by the absence of such structures.7 Nonetheless, it may be validly claimed that almost all societies have had activities and products that we could (and should) categorize as art. To that extend, it may simply be stated that throughout history 'art' has rarely been either associated with or under the control of a ruling class. Even in class based societies 'art' has existed outside of the mainstream or control of dominant classes.8 All classes and groups have had art of their own and both activities and things with clear artistic content and form.

Yet within the domain of art as a self-conscious and formal social and cognitive domain the problem of art and its relation to a ruling or dominant class still remains. Here, the problem is primarily, as we have shown, a definition which denies the critical import of sociology. 'Art' as a self-conscious, categorically autonomous form with a particular meta-language deemed to be separate and isolated from other socio-political functions, may be said to have rarely if ever existed outside the domain of the dominant class. Such art that has existed outside the hegemony of the dominant class is normally categorized not as art but as some sub-genera of artistic form which might be labelled 'primitive', 'commercial', 'black', 'working class'9 or other form of 'art'. Art here is, by definition, the art of the dominant class; the class in control of the museums, the universities, the media which today assigns objects with the status 'art'.

We have said that at one critical level the problem of the position of art in society is definitional. Yet the very problem of definition which seems to remove art from its sociology is at its root only possible in particular social systems ie. class based systems. More, it is only credible and supportable when encapsulated in capitalism. Thus we are not surprised by the relationship between formalism and the creation of the autonomous and fragmented status of art in modern capitalist society. Nor are we surprised by the uniqueness of this relation to modern capitalism.10

A self-defined, autonomous art categorically separated from other uses and functions in which the product and the creator of that product are described in terms of 'their-own-sake' necessitates particular political-economic relationships for its support. These in turn, we shall see, are a part of a particular sociology which in turn defines the art that it produces—or at least that which falls under the rubric and social practice which categorizes art. At the base of any *such art-for-arts-sake* is an economic system in which not all members of the society must *produce* for the support, survival and reproduction of that society. Said another way, such an art form demands that some produce surplus products which are expropriated for the support of those who do not produce. More, it assumes a political economy in which there is both a way of deciding how this product is to be appropriated and how value is to be assigned to non-productive activities such that they may be supported and rewarded. Logically it is possible to have such systems whereby those whose product has been expropriated would decide on its use by others. However, in such societies the value of things would have to be also defined by their social use and exchange effectively based on social utility. In such societies therefore an 'art' could not exist where it is defined precisely in terms of some abstract value. 'Art' could not be either autonomous or worthy by a measure which emphasizes its separation from social utility and its importance because of its-own-sake. Where things are given worth in terms of their use, measures of that worth must be both concrete and rooted in a social practice.

Where measures of worth are separated from the process of social use and production, where the worth of things are not a function of the production involved and where some live off the productive surplus created by others ie. control that surplus production, we have a class based society. In such societies it becomes logically and politically not only expedient but imperative to separate worth from both social utility and the productive system. Justification and legitimization for those who do not produce the surplus supporting the society must be found and the nature of worth isolated from both social utility and production, precisely because those who control

production are themselves non productive. Since production and the labor put into it are expropriated by those who do not produce, the product and by extension all things must be divorced from their social

basis and given a false autonomy. This is essential because the value things have is primarily the labor used to produce them while their use and control in class societies is divorced from that labor. Thus, things must be viewed as separate and autonomous, and their value based on a system of categories which hides the process that created them. As such, things must be fetishized as things-in-themselves. In class based societies ie. capitalism, where the appropriation of things is based on a concept of a free individual in a free market, where exchange value replaces use value and labor value must produce a surplus value, things must be mystified as autonomous and free; as things-in-themselves. Thus we get a series of contradictions in which things are free yet related, autonomous yet having value-value being a relation. In order to mediate this contradiction and at the same time to justify its exploitative use of people as well as measure labor and its results outside of the process by which it is created, things and people are commoditized.

While both the history and relations of capitalism are clearly more complex and hidden, these relations are critical to an understanding of art in capitalism. First and foremost, artists do by necessity live off the surplus value produced by others. Secondly they do not receive this value as an exchange of use values but as a series of commodities based on exchange value. As the products of those who labor are essentially expropriated by those who control the labor process, artists must receive most of their rewards from the dominant class. Thus artists exchange their products for the expropriated products of others. In such a situation, the artists' product must be equalized to other products; must be assigned a value in the exchange; must be commoditized. As we said, the critical mode in exchange value is neither the labor that went into it nor the use to which it is put. Rather its value adheres as a commodity. In such a situation, for art to have worth it must have exchange value. As a result it must be removed from its context and assigned a series of arbitrary relations which will guarantee its value; thus such criteria which separate art from its activity, which like cherries demands that it be boxed, stored and sold.

Art as part of capitalism must be reduced to an autonomous product like all things. It must be a function of a value. The autonomy that it receives is effectively illusory for its autonomy is rooted precisely in the conditions and structures of the society which it claims to transcend. More, such an art form demands that it be supported and in so doing becomes part of the domain of the dominant class ie. the class with the resources to either control its use or its manufacture. The more costly it is, the more it needs support and the more it becomes encapsulated by the dominant class. For this class, their interests demand that things be alienated and commoditized. Thus, the formal notions of art become the handmaiden of a class society, not its anti-thesis.

What we are positing is that art for its own sake is anything but that. To the degree that artists demand an artificial autonomy and art is defined formally, it will remain within the purview of the dominant class. It defines and is defined by specific contexts; yet at the same time able to transcend these contexts. Art is found in all societies as an active expressive element. People clearly relate to art, particularly an art that relates or addresses their needs, feelings and problems. No matter how commoditized art is it can and does exhibit meanings, contents, forms that actively express human concerns and as such is used, acted upon and effective. But to the extent that art defines an artificial autonomy based on its own meta-language it removes itself from people—or most people—and accepts a commoditized value and status at the expense of effect and communication. This does not mean that there will be no art. People produce art whether autonomously or not. People produce art for themselves, as an activity within the larger spectrum of their lives, as part of their productive activities, as a part of their everyday non-autonomous lives. To not label it art is simply to create a false value and

demand encapsulation by those whose interests demand things-in-themselves.

In answer to our question; art has not been fundamentally nor historically within the complete hegemony of a dominant class. Nor has it always demanded an illusory autonomy. Only when it is for its own sake does it demand relations with the dominant class for its support. If this is true, it becomes imperative that radical artists concern themselves not with the art of the dominant class as a commoditized form. It demands a critique of this art and the position it takes, it demands examination of why this art often succeeds in spite of its own self definition. Most important it demands an understanding of art produced by people as activity rooted in their daily lives, and as a use value not alienated nor autonomous; not separate and distinct but as an active part related to life as a complex and social phenomenon. It demands a critique of society as well as art. For it is in society that art will change, not as art-in-itself.

St. Louis, Missouri

NOTES

1. *WHY ARE AN ARTIST AND A SOCIAL SCIENTIST ATTEMMPTING TO COLLABORATE?* The idea of a dialogue between an artist and a social scientist is presented here, in an admittedly early stage, as an effort to expose the relationships between the activity of art and its social imbeddedness. This question and answer format was used in an attempt to initiate discussion that would discover those overlapping points of contact which could be investigated in further depth at a later date. An exchange between members of two disciplines should bring into focus the relevance of all those artifacts, activities and 'aesthetics' of everyday life which the artist has been trained to ignore for the most part, or to glorify indiscriminantly.

2. Among many social scientists, 'mouthtalk' refers to concepts in which words describe other words without a meaningful content.

3. Autonomy refers to a conception of art as a form independent of its social context. While formalists may admit that the social context exists at some prior level, the art product is valued as a form about itself which exists for its own sake and whose understanding is based in an independent meta-language. For an insightful discussion of what this meta-language is and how it works, see Henri Lefebvre's *Everyday Life in the Modern World.* Harper and Row. 1968.

4. By sociology is meant the process of art as a social product and its self-critical understanding as such a product. As Goldmann points out, to separate art from its role as a social phenomenon either creating or viewing it, is essentially to remove it from its sociology and as a result creates a form of mystification (cf. *Philosophy and Human Sciences.* Cape. 1969). More important, a thing is not only what it is, but also how we understand it, i.e., its sociology.

5. For a discussion of the mystified and powerless role of art in modern western society, see Roland Barthes. *Mythologies.* Cape. 1972.

6. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary.* 1971. G&C Merriam Co.

7. Sahlis, Marshall. *Tribesmen.* Prentice Hall. 1968.
Krader. Lawrence. *The Formation of the State.* Prentice Hall. 1968.

8. It may be noted here that many art critics and historians might argue that this is only valid if we classify these in terms of non-traditional art objects. As we have argued. this is precisely the problem with such critics and historians and their self proclaimed 'art'.

9. These terms may appear to be inconsistent. Certainly formalist critics would see them as such. For us, what is critical is the differentiation of artistic forms by the use of amendments to the category, art. Eventually, all, if not equal, are similar in their sub-genera status. Moreover, we do not necessarily hold that all are of equal importance or worth, but they are all artistic forms (cf. Barthes).

10. See Gimpel, Jean *The Cult of Art.* Stein & Day. 1969.

THE ORGANIZATION OF CULTURE UNDER MONOPOLY CAPITALISM, PART I "HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE ARTS AND ARTIFACTS INDEMNITY ACT?"

MICHAEL CORRIS, PRESTON HELLER & ANDREW MENARD

Most of us in the United States view art in museums. In fact, museums have become the most prominent showcase not only for art, but for culture in general: on the one hand, they are becoming adjuncts to more formal learning, one means of making education more 'relevant', more accessible; on the other hand, they are playing an essential role in international cultural relations. Despite their cultural prestige, and despite a long history of support from the private sector, few United States museums have enough money to meet their needs now. For many reasons the United States government has decided to meet this financial crisis by providing various forms of federal assistance to museums, assistance which appears to benefit everyone, from museums to 'the people of the United States.' Two bills have been before Congress: 'The Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act' just became law; 'The Museum Services Act' is still in committee. While many people consider these bills to be cultural legislation, that is, only minimally linked to politics, their true significance lies precisely in their political and economic ramifications. Culture has never been isolated from politics; indeed, it has become an even more important element of political manipulation now that psychological aggression is superceding armed aggression. Why send in the Marines if you can send in culture?

The point is, as the federal government escalates its support for museums, cultural policies will become increasingly centralized and bureaucratized. Decisions about culture will become even more removed from most of our lives. The problem is how to counteract this tendency, how to seize control of our culture, so that 'participating' in culture doesn't remain another exercise in political impotence but becomes an expression of political power.

The following transcript is from a videotape we made in January in response to this latest manifestation of monopoly capitalism. It consists of two interviews we did in Washington D.C. and a conversation the three of us had later about those interviews, as well as a few "public opinion" inserts. The interviews are certainly edited, but we have never, as far as we know, misrepresented the people we interviewed. That's one of the reasons we included our comments to begin with—we wanted to deal with their answers on their own terms first and then explode them according to our own notion of how government support of culture

might more accurately be represented. Copies of the tape itself are available on request.

Key to locations
[1] Interviews with museum-goers at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
[2] Interviews with Jack Duncan, Counsel, House Select Subcommittee on Education at the Rayburn Office Building, Washington, D.C.
[3] Interviews with Robert Wade, General Counsel, National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C.
[4] Conversations between the authors at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

[1]

Woman: (responding to the question 'How do you feel about the "Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act"?') I'm sorry, but I have no …

P. Heller: You don't know anything about …

Woman: I'm not familiar with this …

Second Woman (off camera) I'm an Australian.

[2]

P. Heller: Mr. Duncan, could you briefly outline the development of the indemnification bill?

J. Duncan: Well, over the past several years there have been several exhibitions which have been brought to the U.S. and because of the cost of insurance and because of the importance of the particular exhibition, whether it be the Scythian Gold or the Chinese exhibition, special legislation had to be passed by the Congress in order to insure against any particular loss that might have occurred. So, in order to prevent having to pass special legislation each time these exhibitions came over … and I might add they proved to be very successful, the American public really responded … so in order to expedite and encourage more exhibitions of this sort we pursued this legislation.

[3]

P. Heller: Mr. Wade, could you outline the development of the indemnification bill for us from the time of its inception a couple of years ago?

R. Wade: Well, it's maybe a little bit involved but I'll boil down what I know of the development of the thing. As I recall there was a group, the so-called Museum Presidents Association, which has long been concerned over the high cost of insurance premiums on international loan exhibitions, and this group expressed its concern to the chairman of the National Endowment, Nancy Hanks, about two and a half years to three years ago. I'm not certain of the exact timing. Nancy, naturally, was equally interested and as far as I recall the result was Nancy directed me to look into it … in order to determine if we could do anything about this. We did come up with some draft legislation which, after some meetings that took place … It's a little difficult to reconstruct this thing off the top of my head … but there were meetings that took place with various interested parties. We discussed the matter with the Office of Management and Budget, discussed it with Representatives from the Hill, discussed it with other interested museums plus representatives of the museums directed by members of the Museum Presidents group. And the result was something could be done about this legislatively and something should be done about it. This legislation was generated by the Museum Presidents' concern and 'they represented, of course, the whole museum field in that connection.

A. Menard: Right. What year was that?

R. Wade: This was, well if I recall, it was early 1973, very early. There had been some … well I should say that early '73, January 1973 was the first time a group was brought together. We called them here together at the Endowment as a matter of fact. That was the meeting I referred to with the Office of Management and Budget people, people from the Hill, and some museum people. That was the first.

P. Heller: Was that called by Nancy Hanks?

R. Wade: Uh …

P. Heller: Yourself, I mean I don't …

R. Wade: Yes, I …

P. Heller: You called it?

R. Wade: Yes, I … after Nancy directed me to, let's do something about this …

A. Menard: Because of pressure put on her or what?

94TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1800

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 28, 1975

Referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

AN ACT

To amend and extend the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, to provide for the improvement of museum services, and to provide indemnities for exhibitions of artistic and humanistic endeavors, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act".

FEDERAL COUNCIL

SEC. 101. (a) The Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities (hereafter in this Act referred to as the "Council"), established under section 9 of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, is authorized

R. Wade: Well … well pressure [nervous laugh] …

P. Heller: The museum lobby …

R. Wade: Expressions of concern by the museum field resulted in Nancy being concerned; I guess that's a fair way to put it. And I thought at the time that it would be a good idea to get all the people together at that stage to just generally feel out the possibilities and, but there had been concern expressed earlier which goes back prior to January 1973. I guess all this was in the hopper beginning to get attention sometime in 1972, late 1972. And I don't recall the exact date … the Museum Presidents' letter to Nancy …

A. Menard: Right.

R. Wade: Douglas Dillon was involved in that.

[4]

P. Heller: … quite a substantial boost …

M. *Corris:* … relative to the rest of the budget …

P. Heller: Exactly.

A. Menard: And this isn't, I mean the Indemnification Bill isn't the only legislation that's going to help museums. There is a Museum Services Act, which is pending, which would guarantee $85 million in matching grants over the next three years, which means that it's really generating $170 million, so there's even more going to museums.

P. Heller: The Act is even more comprehensive in terms of its extending support for museums …

A. Menard: Right.

P. Heller: Because it covers virtually everything.

M. *Corris:* Some of the objections we raised to it were that it appeared to be too blatant an example of writing in museums as a permanent part of the National Endowment program.

A. Menard: Right.

M. *Corris:* There was this block of money that was going to go particularly to museums. Now as far as Nancy Hanks is concerned museums are good business, and that's the way she relates to them.

P. Heller: She relates all art to business …

M. Corris: … In the testimony on this legislation.

A. Menard: She may, I don't know. AlI I know is that's certainly how she argues and that's how …

P. Heller: It certainly generates a lot of business outside art itself; it generates business in the community around where these cultural centers grow …

M. Corns: It's just so easy for this whole network of museums, just putting the financial aspect under the government's control, centralizes it incredibly.

A. Menard: Right. And the other thing is by stimulating the private sector in the direction of museums, that establishes the connections between the public and the private sector, focusing on museums. So their power is increased in two directions at once really …

M. Corris: In other words, as cultural institutions their prestige is enhanced …

A. Menard: Right.

M. Corris: … Because the government is paying so much attention to them; and as private-sector institutions their resources are increasing, which also enhances their prestige.

[2]

J. Duncan: I may be incorrect, but I think most countries have, at least our problem was our museums, we were operating as independent museums, as opposed to European or what have you … our museums, like the Metropolitan, were dealing with, even though they were dealing with a museum they are dealing … it's basically a government institution and therefore, they are dealing with that government of that country. So those countries, they've been able to take care of theirs, or take care of it on the one hand … We have had problems because the individual museums had to pick up the cost of the indemnification.

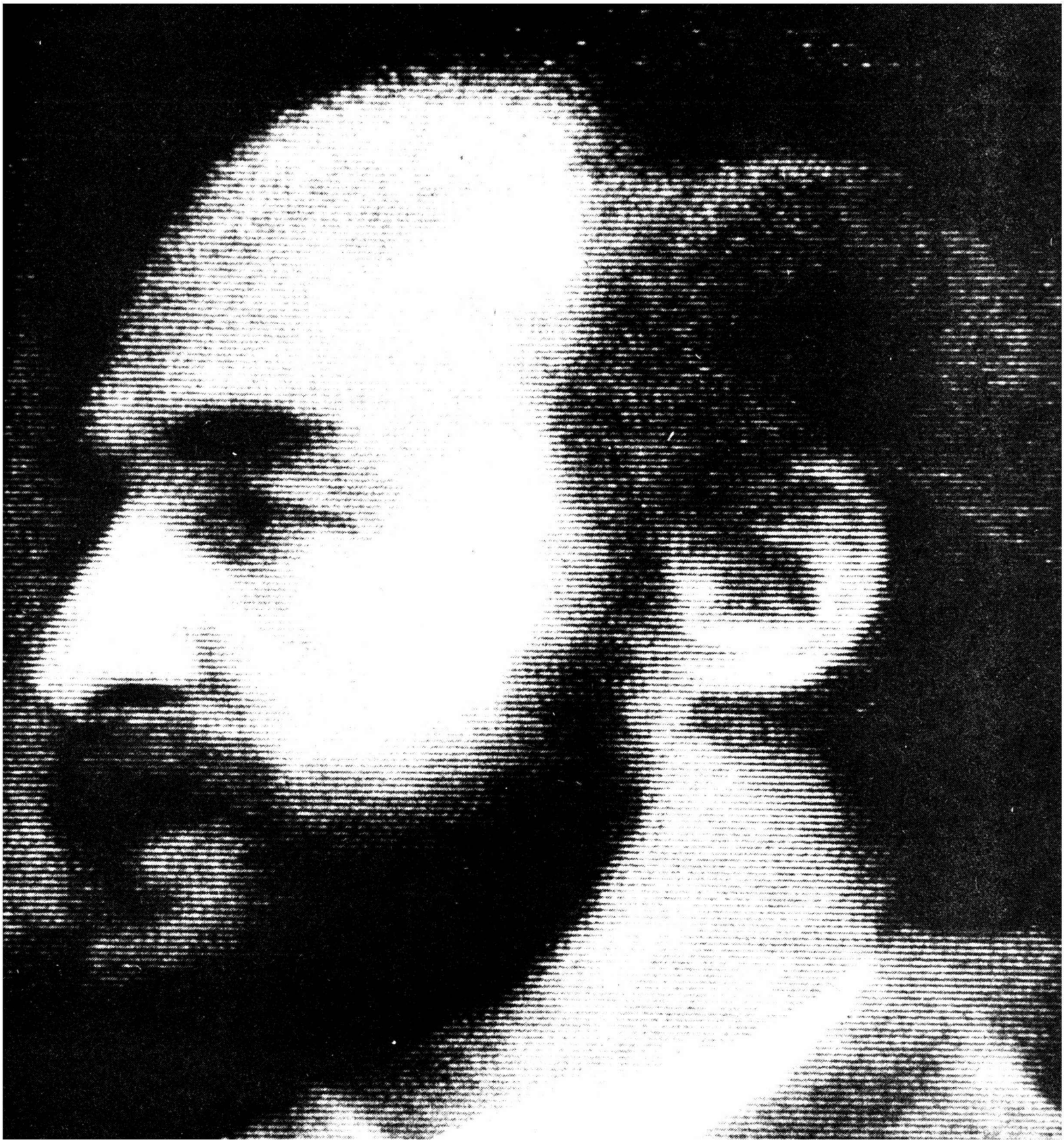
P. Heller: Did you in fact draft, or make amendments to, this bill in the committee?

J. Duncan: Yes.

P. Heller: So you drafted part of the legislation?

]. *Duncan:* Yes. We worked with Steve Wexler, who is now deceased, who was probably as involved as anyone; he worked for Senator Pell [Republican-Rhode Island] . He was killed last fall in an accident. Bob Wade and myself

HOW DOES THE ORGANIZATION OF YOUR CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS LIMIT YOUR PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE?



more or less put together the legislation and then we sent it around to various people who we wanted comments from, and getting suggestions and working with the State Department, Peter [Solmmsen] … whom you'll see … and well, Dan Herrick [Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York] being one, from the Metropolitan. Finally when we thought we had a piece of Iegislation that could be supported, bi-partisan support, by both Democrats and Republicans, conservatives and liberals, we dropped it in the hopper, as they say here.

* * *

In the House of Represcntatives August 22,1974

Mr. Brademas introduccd the following joint resolution.

Joint Resolution

" … To provide for the indemnification of the Metropolitan Museum of New York for loss or damage suffered by objects in exhibition in the U.S.S.R."

[3]

R. Wade: The Endowment sponsored those ad hoc bills along with the State Department strongly supporting them and I did get involved to some extent in the drafting of the ad hoc bill, particularly with reference to the Russian show. Perhaps I should correct that, it may have been … no, it was the Russian show.

P. Heller: Do you think that the ad hoc legislation that was passed to indemnify the Soviet exchange, do you think that that set a precedent for this permanent … for this law?

R. Wade: Both of those pieces of ad hoc legislation were helpful as precedents and, in fact, they offered a good illustration of the problem Congress would have on its hands if it did not enact a general legislation. In other words, there would have to be ad hoc Iegislation every time a major exhibition was developing that was hoped would be covered. The precedents did help and they offered some practical experience also in the implementation of such a guarantee in that the State Department and the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities did get involved in negotiations which resulted in the ad hoc indemnification coverage.

[2]

P. Heller: Now when the ad hoc legislation was passed, it seemed like the status of our relations with China and Russia—detente—had a great deal to do with those exhibitions. During the Subcommittcc hearings, several people mentioned that it would have been impossible to have had, at Ieast the Russian exchange, if we were not able to indemnify. Now would you say initially, at that point, indemnification was very closely linked to detente?

[3]

R. Wade: Oh yes, definitely, definitely.

P. Heller: … Linked to detwnte; to forwign policy in gencral?

R. Wade: Thwy were, they were.

[3]

J. Duncan: I think that the evidence on the surface has proven that detente probably provided the mechanism by which this Iegislation finally evolved. And I say that primarily because it received the support of the President and the Secretary of State …

* * *

The following are excerpts from President Ford's signing statement:

" … One of the conditions which the bill requires … is that the Secretary of State or his designee certify that the proposed cxchange would be in the national interest …"

" … The legislative history links the determination of national interest … to exhibits and exchanges which would be in the 'foreign policy interests of the United States' … so that the indemnification program (isn't) an insurance relief mechanism …."

" … I believe that such linkage is essential to justify involvement of the Fedcral Government in this kind of an indemnification program ….

IS IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE WHICH ISN'T IMPERIALISTIC?

[2]

P. Heller: There is a phrase in the law which says that these exhibitions shall be indemnified if they are in "the national interest", to be determined by the Secretary of State or his designee …

J. Duncan: That's right.

P. Heller: And when the final legislation passed it seemed to me that that was a very important part of the Iegislation. Almost as if, well, could you define something that's in "the national interest?" I mean, what that means here … ?

J. Duncan: 'Well now then, most countries, uh, the art treasures are secured and often controlled by the government and in the event there was a loss, that it was, number one, it was in the national interest and important enough to bring it over here to take the risk; and two, you were working in close and congenial working relationship with that particular country so *that* would be in the national interest also. To make sure we don't antagonise either way. For instance, bringing over the Chinese art, helping the American people to understand and see a sense of history of what those countries have done and vice versa. It would be in the national interest, perhaps, for Russians to see, or Chinese to see, some of our works of art, so that their people and their Ieaders could understand … rather than just depend on the written word. They could see just what the culture is made out of, from its works of art.

[3]

R. Wade: Can the government get into this sort of thing, should the government get into this sort of thing? Should the government be protecting private museum exhibitions? What is the government interest, what is the Federal interest in buying insurance or providing insurance for these exhibitions?

P. Heller: That's a good question.

R. Wade: Yes, that's the question, and the answer is … well, the government would have a Iegitimatc interest in the event that it was considered to be in the national interest to do so and the national interest is most often affected by what happens overseas or in relations with overseas parties … overseas countries, rather … so that there was a natural tendency there to tie in something like the State Department.

P. Heller: How did the State Department express or define "in the national interest" in relation to …

R. Wade: Well that's something that nobody knows at this point because the thing hasn't been implemented yet. It's not even effective until January 20th.

[2]

P. Heller: You never did answer the question of financial interest, what it essentially says is "for the protection" … oh, you have it there.

J.,Duncan: You're talking about the report language?

M. *Corris* [reading from the House report of November 20,1975] : "… to indemnify against loss or damage eligible items in accordance with the provisions of this act, and on such terms and conditions as the Council shall prescribe by regulation to protect the financial interest of the United States …"

J. Duncan: Well I mean that's a sort of a catch-all, I think it's … works of art … to make sure that it's not to the detriment of our financial interest to … if we say we'll indemnify it and it's not to our … I mean, if we can't afford to pay for it in case there is a loss, it's not in the financial interest of the United States. We're assuming that, I think, that in most instances when our exhibitions go out of the country there will either be a joint agreement or else there will be a … that country will take up the indemnification. I can't imagine the State Department allowing any great works of art to go into an unfriendly or even a potentially unfriendly country. What would happen if you lost, you know, a Madonna or whatever, were destroyed? Somebody's going to be very upset; as well as people around the world. It's like in the Vatican: they put everything behind glass and you can't feel and touch anymore. It's like the Liberty Bell up in Philadelphia, terrible thing.

M. Corris: Then the State Department would be compelled to determine, through their information-gathering resources, whether

HOW DO CULTURAL POLICIES CONTROL YOUR RANGE OF LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITY; HOW DO THEY MANIPULATE YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS IN GENERAL?

or not it was a stable situation?

J. Duncan: [nodding Yes]

M. Corris: That means, perhaps that would mean, that they would have to be aware of all the possible terrorist activities or radicals that might be in the area?

J. Duncan [still nodding Yes] : And the cost of most of this insurance on this indemnification is the security: a tremendous amount of security in any of these exhibitions. They just don't appear in a building you don't know. It's like providing protection for the Presidcnt.

[3]

R. Wade: The act does say that we will, the Council that is, will prescribe regulations which would protect the financial interest of the United States. And what that would mean would be, although I don't know that that's the object of explanation in the committee reports, that would normally refer to the fact that you wouldn't want the government becoming liable for great sums of money due to negligence of, perhaps, some other party or a museum, perhaps, in its packing and shipping procedures. In other words, the government should, in its regulations, insure to the greatcst extent possible that proper security arrangements will be provided for; transportation arrangements, generally that sort of thing.

P. Heller' How would they go about providing for security for example?

R. Wade: One element in the consideration of an exhibition would be input from the State Department as to whether they felt the social conditions there were stable. A preliminary judgement of some kind by the State Department would be very useful if there was any question about the stability of an area—the political stability of an area—or say there was a record of terrorists' acts, maybe that the Council wouldn't be aware of; perhaps not gigantic terrorist actions but you know, minor ones that the State Department might be more aware of. That would be one Iegitimate element that would be considered.

P. Heller: How would they get information?

R. Wade: The State Department, of course, has reports being filed constantly by its people in these countries and on the scene.

A. Menard. Rut the State was called in for what reason, simply because there were overseas exhibitions?

R. Wade: I think that going back to … you have to remember that before this thing got off the ground it was … fundamental questions were asked like … Can the government even get into this sort of thing, should the government get into this sort of thing? Should the government be protecting private museum exhibitions? What is the government interest, what is the Federal interest in buying insurance or providing insurance for these exhibitions? .

P. Heller: That's a good question …

R. Wade: Yes, that's the question and the answer is, well the government would have a legitimate interest in the event that it was considered to be in the national interest to do so and the national interest is most often affected by what happens overseas or in relations with overseas parties … overseas countries, rather … so that there was a natural tendency there to tie in something like the State Department. I think it boils down to trying to crank into this Iegislation an appropriate—because it is a bit of a precedent, it's a new type of … there are other indemnification programs in the government, but in terms of indemnifying American-cultural institutions against loss, this was a step forward for the government. In my opinion a very significant, historically significant, step forward for the United States. But basically in a nutshell, to justify the federal government in doing this it was just felt that utilizing the State Department as a partner in reviewing these applications was appropriate.

[2]

P. Heller: Do you remember what any State Department concerns were; what their input was in terms of the Iegislation? What they wanted out of it?

J. Duncan: All we wanted was their support. I think State Department input was their encouraging our being able to take care of a two-way street, as oppose to just coming over here; in other words, if there was an exchange situation we would or could take care of that. And that was directly attributable to the State

Department interest. They wanted to be able to handle either side as long as there was an exchange.

A. Menard: Therefore, one brings in the State Department because those are the people who usually deal with this sort of thing; one grants them a certain amount of power, right, but basically it's a coalition of the agencies which would normally be involved in this sort of legislation to begin with.

[3]

R. Wade: Well I guess, in a nutshell, the State Department is involved of necessity because it will involve overseas connections. The fact that there arc relationships between agencies of foreign governments—like the Louvre and the British Museum and so forth—does of necessity involve, or makes logical the involvement of, the State Department in the implementation of this legislation.

[2]

J. *Duncan:* The national interest concern I think, was primarily to give a say to the State Department, which it had in the past. Mainly because of its history it had a say in what …

A. Menard: Went out of the country?

J. *Duncan:* And coming in. And therefore it was natural that you tie them in some way.

A. Menard: How come the State Department has such a large say over what is defined as the national interest?

]. *Duncan:* Well that's why I use the issue of the historical development. They were involved with the Scythian Gold, they did bring in the Chinese [artifacts] and it was partly determined by the policy of detente.

A. Menard: Right.

J. *Duncan:* Uh, and all of our … most of our … cultural exchange program has gone through the State Department and *not* the Endowment for the Arts.

P. Heller: Well the USIA has quite an extensive program …

J. Duncan: That's correct. All of our cultural exchanges are controlled and therefore this is a cultural exchange and thereforc you would say … and they determine what goes out and what comes in, in the national interest. They obviously do not bring in something that would undermine some position.

A. Menard: Or allow something out?

J. Duncan: Yes.

P. Heller: Well, do you think indemnification would have become law if museum shows as cultural exchanges weren't an important part of American foreign policy?

[3]

R. Wade: Would the bill have been passed without the State Department's involvement? Or the foreign policy aspects?

P. Heller: Right.

R. Wade: I don't know the answer to that …

P. Heller: You alluded to it a little earlier when you said that the State Department got involved in terms of federal money going for this kind of project.

R. Wade: Yeah, of course. The State' Department conducts its cultural exchange program. I don't know the answer as to whether or not this bill would have passed absent this kind of thing. I have to say that in the initial stages when we were looking at the whole basic concept, the whole possibility of some legislation, that most people felt—and I felt that way myself—that we would need some kind of State Department involvement to justify the legislation. You know this thing about the appropriate federal interest in doing the whole thing; there are many people who would just have at that time raised their eyebrows over the whole concept, unless there was some kind of proper federal interest.

Voice of R. Wade: I was very upset with all that heavy emphasis on foreign policy, I really didn't like it at all. The thing's … it is intended to be implemented with the cultural significance being the primary factor and over here, these panels over here, view the exhibition they are going to be looking at it for cultural significance, they don't give a shit what the State Department says, they don't give a shit, the only thing we really want to get out of the State Department is a check-off; a little box, you know, 'eligible' or 'not eligible.'

[4]

A. Menard: I think the problem is, as your

last question to Duncan indicated, museums … which, according to him, aren't bad institutions. They think this is a good bill, they honestly think that. Wade thinks it; he thought it was compromised by certain language, by foreign policy language. But he thought it was a good bill. .

P. Heller: Well, he thought it was a good bill when he first drafted it …

A. Menard: He still thinks it is a good bill.

P. Heller: He does. But he's nervous because of the State Department involvement …

A. Menard: Yes, but he still takes for granted all the cultural aspects of it. The only thing he is worried about is if the State Department will make a decision not to have a show; he just wants them to rubber-stamp it. But it doesn't mean that what they want to send out is necessarily … as a matter of fact I'll bet you that most of the shows that go out—given the connections between museums and foreign policy anyway—that there is not going to be any problem with the State Department.

M. *Corris:* Well, let's face it …

P. Heller: What kind of show …

M. *Corris:* … the Met is the best place …

A. Menard: You're not dealing outside of Official Culture if they get together a show …

M. *Corris:* We are not interested in Scythian Gold or French paintings …

A. Menard: I wouldn't say I'm uninterested in it, but in the way it enters museums.

M. Corris: As far as they are concerned, that's a weak point; we're providing an alternative, but the question is what about that which already exists? You don't realistically expect that all this is going to be allowed to go down the drain.

A. Menard: Not with Hoving building out in the back here …

M. Corris: It's going to continue to exert that kind of influence, what we have to do is undermine this in terms of the consciousness it promotes.

Voice of R. Wade: I can see down the road the State Department denying exhibitions because they don't for some reason like it. I can see that and that's why I don't like it at all. I did everything I could to fight it and single-handedly, almost, I wrote the goddamn report, quoted Nancy [Hanks] in there twice going the other way, and getting the Committee to support it, but you can't control everything …

[2]

P. Heller: Are you familiar with the procedure that is used to select the witnesses to give testimony at hearings?

J. Duncan: Well I more or less have a certain degree of responsibility for that. There is really no system. Over a number of years you learn who the people are who are interested in an area; sometimes they may be pro- or con- an issue, and at least as far as this [bill] is concerned we have been recognized as being balanced in our approach to legislation. We're not out to do our own thing, as they say in the popular jargon, necessarily. We want to get a proper perspective of what we want to do … to accomplish. I think we bring in a broad range of witnesses.

[3]

A. Menard: So what you're saying essentially, say, for the regular indemnification [bill], was that museums were the most important lobbying force or what have you for the bill; for what eventually became S-1800.

R. Wade: Right.

P. Heller: That was your opening statement.

R. Wade: Right. This legislation was generated by the Museum Presidents' concerned and they represented, of course, the whole museum field in that connection.

A. Menard: What year was that?

R. Wade: This was, as I recall, early 1973, very early. There had been some … I should say early 1973, January 1973 was the first time a group was brought together. We called them here together at the Endowment as a matter of fact. That was the meeting I referred to with the Office of Management and Budget, people from the Hill, and some museum people. That was the first …

P. Heller: Was that called by Nancy Hanks?

R. Wade: Uh …

P. Heller: Yourself, I mean I don't …

R. Wade: Yes, I …

P. Heller: You called it?

R. Wade: Yes, I … after Nancy [Hanks] directed me to, let's do something about this.

A. Menard: Because of pressure put on her or what?

R. Wade: Well, well, pressure [nervous laugh] …

P. Heller: The museum lobby …

R. Wade: Expressions of concern by the museum field resulted in Nancy being concerned. And if Nancy gets concerned then I get concerned. I guess that's a fair way to put it.

[4]

A. Menard: As we all found from the testimony most of the people who testified were museum people, right? There were very few people who testified against it and there were very few people who weren't involved in the very high echelons of decision-making in the art world.

P. Heller: Isn't it pretty obvious why the museum crowd would testify?

A. Menard: Sure. But what isn't so obvious is that no one else did, either.

M. *Corris;* The news becomes privileged information to the extent that the media can't handle it.

A. Menard: Well, they are not interested in handling it …

P. Heller: Well, it's not hot stuff.

M. *Corris:* It's not hot stuff, and the way they handle it is always pretty uninteresting.

A. Menard: It just shows the media is pretty shortsighted. They haven't picked up on the importance of culture these days.

M. *Corris:* It's like reading the press releases of the Guerilla Art Action Group, they were in there; or when Annette Kuhn [author of *Culture Shock* column for the Village Voice, a New York weekly] mentioned the picketting [at the Whitney Museum, New York] or the thing in Australia [suppression of Art & Language show in Sydney and Melbourne] they were in there but they were disconnected. They weren't embedded in any kind of political current.

A. Menard: An isolated response to an isolated event.

P. Heller: Not only does the media fragment it, but they have no real idea for organization. The problem of being able to relate to the notion of organization.

A. Menard: The Guerilla Art Action Group was never really organized beyond itself; I mean that really was one of its problems.

[2]

P. Heller: One of the things I noticed reading through the hearings was that the majority of the testimony I read was pro- this legislation; and the majority of the witnesses in fact were from the museums. There were very few dissenting opinions; I only noticed one or two … in the whole testimony given. Do you have any thoughts about why this was so overwhelmingly one way?

J. *Duncan:* Well I think with the exception of perhaps some insurance companies that might have feared a loss of revenue, I can't imagine too much opposition … the history of losses and therefore the cost to the United States Government and, in turn, the United States taxpayer, is very minimal at the maximum and nothing at the minimum. The reason we didn't have tremendous opposition from insurance companies was the fact that Lloyds of London normally collected most of the revenue, I think about 80%. So it wasn't taking too much from American companies …

[3]

R. Wade: No dissenting opinions?

P. Heller: Yes; there was virtually unanimous agreement about …

R. Wade: Well, uh, I guess because it was a good bill. It's hard to be against something like that but as I say, it has a limited constituency in terms of its effect on the population, in terms of organizations I mean, not in terms of its effect. In terms of organizations which are primarily museums and insurance companies.

[1]

Woman: I know nothing of it, to tell you the truth …

Second Woman: You mean of 1975? The modern art?

P. Heller: No; the act that was just passed

into law, the "Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act."

Second Woman [turning to companion at desk]: Oh, … you answer that. Did you read about that? [laughter]

[2]

P. Heller: Who do you think will derive the most benefits from this legislation?

J. *Duncan:* I think the American people, having the opportunity, the people who can't afford to go to China, Russia, France, what have you. They'll be able to see some of the great treasures that they have read about or seen on television.

[3]

R. Wade: Well my own view is that the people of the United States benefit from it tremendously …

[1]

Woman: It's marvelous, I'm all for it. Oh Yes, absolutely.

[4]

P. Heller: It's the same old relationship to the culture, whether it be the Scythian Gold or whatever; people are still going to be in a consumer relationship.

A. Menard: Yeah. That really is a big problem, I mean…

M. Corris: So whether you're in a small museum or a large museum, you are contemplating objects.

A. Menard: Small museum or large museum, it doesn't matter much.

M. Corris: You are undermining regional differences simply because you are hooking up to a national network of similar kinds of environmental and learning contexts: museums.

A. Menard: When you are looking at an object in museums it's like you are looking at a dumb object; you're not looking at something that you can interact with and you are certainly not looking at anything that is fixed in a culture in any way—it's isolated.

P. Heller: But that's really interesting, since Wade was working on this legislation as cultural legislation and is really dealing with museums as educational institutions …

A. Menard: Well Duncan, too …

M. *Corris:* As far as these bureaucrats are concerned, the museums are the best places to administer culture; they are the people who can do the job the best, so most of the money will go there. They are the strongest lobby.

A. Menard: And they are seeing it as an alternative to schools now, so there is an increasing emphasis on museums as educational institutions which really raises the question of how well they function that way.

M. *Corris:* It seems to me that part of our job is to kind of chip away at the idea that museums … how museums function as educational institutions. What sort of learning does go on? How we can shift that passive kind of learning to an active participation in constituting culture.

A. Menard: But first of all we have to figure out what concentrating money in the hands of museums means. It means that museums take on a much greater role as cultural institutions; and if they are seen as educational institutions—and they are seen as the salvation of education, in a way—then it means that the salvation of education is once again consumerism.

P. Heller: I don't think that they see it as the salvation of education so much as a natural kind of extension.

A. Menard: That's true. But it just means that the so-called new programs in education are another form of consumerism.

P. Heller: He [J. Duncan] mentioned the museums and television when he was talking about his "whole life idea."

M. *Corris:* Another leisure-time activity …

A. Menard: And that's the thing: leisure-time becomes another aspect of consumerism. Culture becomes more important now and the whole leisure-time industry becomes more important in terms of manipulating consciousness.

[3]

A. Menard: Do you think that … you talk about getting art to the people and you seem to concentrate a lot on museums as the easiest way of doing that …

R. Wade: My concern as a general counsel is limited in this connection, to this particular piece of legislation, in this way of getting the

arts to the people. And I think that museums are tremendous institutions and we have some of the greatest museums in the world here. I just thought it was a good bill and did what I could to help out on it. That's not to say there aren't other ways to get art to the people.

[2]

A. Menard: Do you see a shift in how museums are viewed today?

J. Duncan: Yes. And it is being considered more and more as an educational institution, as you begin to move out of the traditional university and high school building, and out into watching television and going to museums and the whole life idea …

A. Menard: But, at the same time then, you are encouraging the concentration of resources within museums, as institutions to direct money to.

J. Duncan: And I think that what this bill—the indemnification bill—represents is an area of obvious federal or national concern where we can in fact help those institutions and reduce, of course, some of their expenditures. What we are hoping in this legislation is not only to help the large institutions—like the Metropolitan [Museum of Art, New York]—but to help local and small State Museums … to bring in, to really spread, this foreign culture; to see what they are doing over there.

[4]

A. Menard: Duncan is really talking about some form of decentralization; the question is, will it work out in practice? In theory it might.

M. *Corris:* Well, it seems that the kinds of shows they were talking about—the kinds of shows that were brought up in testimony as evidence to the fact that museums couldn't afford these kinds of exchanges—seem to be the kinds of shows that could only be handled by large institutions.

A. Menard; Right. Those with a large staff, things like that. It takes a lot of people to put a show together …

P. Heller: It's likely that the large museums will benefit the most, from this kind of legislation even though the small museums did support it.

A. Menard: Among other things the large museums are those who can lobby best, and know the most people. I mean the reason the bill was adopted to begin with—or rather drafted to bcgin with—is because of a large museum lobby.

M. Corris: But as Wade said, what could happen is you get five or six major shows coming across here .

A. Menard: Which take up all the money. They're talking as if, in fact, there aren't going to be that many shows; which once again reinforces the large museum concept.

[4]

P. Heller: Well one of the questions is: how can we develop a realistic notion of decentralization.

A. Menard: Duncan talks about decentralization, but it really doesn't seem as if it will work out.

M. *Corris:* We have to counter the two strongest points of museums-as-monolithic-cultural-institutions: their organization and the kind of consciousness being promoted and manipulated. And if we are talking about something like the storefront, well, organization would be on a community level.

P. Heller: When you are talking to people about museums, for example, if you bring up something like the Museum Services Act. I don't think many people would object to it—a bill like that—they would see museums as something they enjoy going to on a weekend, on a day off. '

M. *Corris:* Of course they wouldn't object to it if they didn't have a conception of an alternative.

A. Menard: They are educated to think that way; we were educated to think that way.

M. *Corris:* That's part of the implementation of power, the manipulation of consciousness.

A. *Menard:* And that's the reason we are talking about museums in that way.

P. Heller. But the point we have to make very clearly is *our* relationship is in many ways *the same as* their relationship to museums.

A. Menard: It would seem that one of the things we are trying to do is take some control over our culture; what we feel most alienated from in a museum is that when we come her

we are simply voyeurs. There is no control we have over what we see here: there is simply no way we can interact with it except as passive observers, art appreciators. So one of the things we are trying to do when we talk about running a storefront in SOHO and having SOHO as our community (for the time being) is have some control over how we relate to culture. We don't want to be voyeurs.

P. Heller: Exactly, and that's where, if you take an action like the Whitney [protest by Artists Meeting for Cultural Change, January 3, 1976] where, I think, we have to view that action in relation to more comprehensive actions—for example, getting information about this kind of legislation and the Museum Services Act—really beginning to understand what our relationship is to that. Because when we talk about the organization of culture at the highest level, that's really where it takes place.

M. *Corris:* Are you saying that it is enough to provide this information alone?

P. Heller: Oh I don't think it's enough …

A. Menard: But what we are beginning to grasp is that policy-making about culture doesn't take place on ad hoc levels anymore so much-—or regional levels—but on a national level.

M. *Corris:* That's what we learned when we went to Washington.

A. Menard: Right. So simply publicizing *that* is a step in the right direction.

M. *Corris:* So how do you think the information *is* going to function?

P. Heller: Well, I think that what we have to be able to do is provide information about as much legislation as we can find out about; for example, that relates to the arts. We then have to take that information and sort of *invert* our/their "normal" relationship to that information. A lot of people, for example, that we interviewed in the museum … when we asked them if they knew anything about it [the Indemnification Act] and they said they didn't … in terms of the indemnification—we explained basically what it was—they said right off the top that they thought it was a good thing. You have to provide an alternative explanation as to what might happen in terms of indemnification.

M. Corns: Now how are we going to prevent this from becoming something where individual artists are going to demand more money for more individual projects; more individual grants cranking out more paintings and sculptures? How are we going to avoid that reformist position?

P. Heller: That's where the notion of a storefront really comes in: how the storefront will function in terms of community.

A. Menard: Like a resource center?

P.Heller: It would be a resource center.

A. Menard: We are not funding individual artists to go off into their studios to work alone; we are funding a resource centre where people can come to work together.

M. Corris: How would it differ, say, from the liberal coalition we have at the Artists Meeting for Cultural Change? You have a lot of people that get together to do a project—that is, we'll picket the Whitney—but the work itself (they do) doesn't change as a result of that kind of interaction, the kind they have within the group. And what we are trying to do is have a different kind of work evolve from the way we work together.

P. Heller: And where we failed in terms of our participation there is that we were unable to assert …

A. Menard: We haven't been able to talk about that …

M. Corris: … We've just been completely disorganized in terms of that. While we *[The Fox]* were treated as a collective; there were all these disorganizational elements. Because what we were saying is "Look, we have to refer to our social history and how we are embedded in Capitalist society as artists, how we are embedded as producers of culture that is going to be placed in this kind of environment."

A. Menard: How we relate to *each other.*

M. Corris: Exactly all these kinds of relationships. We were saying let's point to that; they were saying let's point to art history as well.

[2]

M. Corris: The thing that worries mc is since Nancy Hanks can virtually set the spirit of the implementation of the National Endowment funding; and since it's obvious

NEWS

Congressman JOHN BRADEMAS

Washington, D.C. Office—202—225-3915
South Bend Office—219—233-8203

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVES ARTS AND HUMANITIES BILL

Washington, D. C., Tuesday, March 23...Legislation to continue Federal support for the arts and humanities through 1980 and assistance for the nation's museums was approved today, 14-0, by the House Subcommittee on Select Education.

Congressman John Brademas (D-Ind.), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Select Education and chief sponsor of the Arts, Humanities and Cultural Affairs Act of 1976, said, "The National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities have made a tremendous contribution over the past decade to the growth of cultural life in America. I am delighted at this strong bipartisan vote to continue these programs.

"The Endowments have supported the creative and performing arts and the study of the humanities in every state in the nation.

"However, as witnesses at hearings before our subcommittee testified, many important cultural institutions in America, such as museums, are suffering severe financial strains, and Federal assistance can for them be crucial."

The measure reported by the subcommittee today, Brademas explained, would:

1. Extend support for the Arts and Humanities Endowments for four more years at $100 million for fiscal year 1977, $113.5 million for fiscal 1978, and such sums as Congress finds necessary for fiscal years 1979 and 1980.

2. Establish a new Institute of Museum Services in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to provide help to museums for exhibits, educational programs, professional curatorial training, conservation of collections, traveling programs and operating expenses generally. The Institute would be administered by a director with the advice of a board broadly representative of all types of museums including science, history, technology and art. The bill authorizes $15 and $25 million, respectively, for the first two years of the program and such sums as Congress may determine for 1979 and 1980.

3. Authorize the National Endowment for the Arts to award a $3 private to $1 Federal matching program of "challenge grants" to cultural institutions in great need. The challenge grant program would receive $15 and $20 million, respectively, for fiscal years 1977 and 1978.

4. Allow the funding of any state humanities council, whether created as a state agency or a voluntary organization, and require that at least $200,000 or 20% of all Humanities Endowment monies go to support state humanities programs.

For further information please contact: The Subcommittee on Select Education (202) 225-5954

that one dollar given to a museum has much greater effect than one dollar given to an individual artist—or a group of artists—don't you think that the spirit—which I read as one of increasing institutional support, in other words, interpreting the cultural life of our nation in terms of institutions—is a bit one sided?

J. *Duncan:* I…I … I…don't know. I mean that's a personal observation. I prefer not to make it I guess.

***A. Menard:* But Hanks certainly seems to believe that.**

J. *Duncan:* Yes.

New York, New York

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2. To Amend and Extend The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965. *Hearing* before the Subcommittee on Select Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, Ninety-Fourth Congress, First Session on H.R. 7782. Etc. Hearing Held in New York, N.Y., (July 14,1975) U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. (1975).

[1] is most easily referred to as the "Joint Hearings on S. 1800 of June 4, 1975", and [2] is referred to as the "House Hearing on H.R. 7782 of July 14, 1975 in New York, N.Y."

Also, numerous letters, reports, etc., available on request from *The Fox*, P.O Box 728, Canal St. Station, New York, New York 10013.

PART II

CULTURE AIN'T NO HEADLESS HORSEMAN

As the government begins to centralize culture-equating the "cultural welfare" of Americans, for the most part, with the financial solvency of large, established institutions—the federal bureaucracy itself is becoming increasingly centralized as well. There may not be a *de jure* Ministry of Culture in this country, but for some time now, a couple years, there has been something approaching

a *de facto* one. It is called the Inter-Agency Committee (lAC), an innocent enough name for the small group of people who meet informally, and with no delegated power, to discuss and perhaps influence at least some of our national cultural policies. The members of this committee are (as presently constituted: it might change if Ford isn't reelected; it might change even if he is: the

point is, the structure remains the same):

Michael Straight (Deputy Chairperson, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)).

Hal Schneidman (Deputy Director, United States Information Agency (USIA)).

Joshua Taylor (Director, National Collection of Fine Arts).

Robert Kingston (Deputy Chairperson, National Endowment for the Humanities).

Peter Solmssen (Advisor on the Arts, State Department).

Listed as frequent guests are.:

Robert Wade (General Council, NEA).

Brian O'Doherty (Director, Visual Arts Program, NEA).

John Spencer (Director, Museums Program, NEA).

Naturally we have to admit we're being a bit provocative here. Claiming that a *de facto* Ministry of Culture may exist in the U.S., without the goods to prove it conclusively, is being provocative. But this is only to admit that the government has successfully thwarted our attempts to sort out the real power of the lAC, that is, beyond the small amount of information which was made available to us. While we may be drawing conclusions primarily by "implication" rather than from "the facts" (which is to say, the government can easily deny many of our conclusions), these conclusions do seem more than merited given the evidence we have.

We found out about the Committee inadvertently, while doing some research on federal legislation for the arts. Peter Solmssen

let the cat out of the bag when he admitted that he occasionally "brainstormed" with individuals from other agencies. Although he was concerned with the general disarray of the government in relation to the arts, he went on to add, "We have no Ministry of Culture here". In fact he emphasized this point several times, which was a bit odd since none of our questions at the time presupposed there was a "Ministry of Culture". In any case, he gave the impression that he had these meetings" once in awhile", on a one-to-one basis. But it was only when he was pressed that he named several of the people he met with (Michael Straight, Joshua Taylor, and John Spencer), and then he ended the conversation .

Mr. Solmssen's behavior made us suspicious, so we began to run down the question of interagency co-operation. Most of this was rather boring legwork, hardly worth detailing. But someone at the United States

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
WASHINGTON D.C. 20506

A Federal agency advised by the National Council on the Arts

MEMORANDUM June 9, 1975

TO: Mr. Michael Straight, Chairman
Inter-Agency Committee on the Arts

FROM: Caroline Millett, Executive Secretary

SUBJECT: Inter-Agency Committee on the Arts Meeting of May 27, 1975

PRINCIPALS

In Attendance

National Endowment for the Arts - Mr. Michael Straight
National Collection of Fine Arts - Dr. Joshua Taylor
United States Information Agency - Mr. Hal Schneidman
Department of State - Mr. Peter Solmssen

Absent

National Endowment for the Humanities - Mr. Robert Kingston

GUESTS

National Endowment for the Arts - Mr. Brian O'Doherty
Dr. John Spencer
Mr. Robert Wade

Discussion of Government Indemnity for International Art Exhibitions

Mr. Wade reported developments on the general bill covering government indemnities for international art exhibitions. The proposed bill (S.1800) indicates the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities as implementing agency. Museums are to apply to the Federal Council for insurance, and if an application is approved, a contract is to be formulated pledging full faith and credit above a deductible (now written as $25,000). Applicants are expected to provide valuations for works to be exhibited, and the Federal Council can accept or reject these valuations.

The Committee discussed whether or not the bill should cover depreciation to damaged items which have been restored. It was agreed that the government policy could be set up to follow general private insurance practice.

As it now stands the indemnity bill extends only to exhibitions coming into the U.S., not to those going abroad. Mr. Solmssen said that the State Department would recommend that S.1800 also cover outbound shows, for example, shows for which the U.S. Government is now buying commercial insurance. The Committee agreed that indemnities should not be extended to wholely domestic exhibitions, although the bill as presently drafted seems to allow for such coverage.

Several members agreed that the Federal Council is an appropriate body to supervise the insurance programs since the Council is comprised of numerous agencies concerned with such insurance. It was deemed preferable that no one government agency be held responsible if a large loss occurs.

Although the Federal Council does not have an administrative staff, the Council can delegate functions to a working group. Bill S.1800 provides for hiring such a staff.

The indemnification bill has the enthusiastic support of American museum directors, according to John Spencer. The International Council of Museums also endorses the bill.

Discussion of the Sao Paulo Bienal

Mr. Schneidman explained his two alternatives in preparing for the Sao Paulo Bienal. He may either pick up an existing exhibition, or he may arrange for an NEA grantee to sponsor the show. He will probably take the former course.

Video art has been selected as the subject for the 1975 Bienal. The Brazilian Commission has endorsed this approach. Mr. O'Doherty cautioned that major video artists may refuse to take part in the Brazilian festival.

Discussion of Policies for International Art Festivals

Brian O'Doherty commented on general policies appropriate for these festivals, and he put forth a number of propositions for improvement. American shows should, in his estimation, be exhibited abroad in "reputable spaces" outside U.S. Embassies. Thus, Mr. O'Doherty hopes to minimize the appearance of imperialism, "General Motors Escthetics". In addition he stressed the importance of bringing together American artists and local arts communities.

Mr. Solmssen remarked that our proposed Office on International Exchange of Exhibitions of Art should be able to provide expertise on selection of subject matter. The Committee commented on "crowd pleasers", subjects which they found especially appropriate for future exhibitions overseas. Among suggested topics were the following: photography, children's art, Levis, skyscrapers, and North American Indians.

Discussion of the Impact of Tax Laws on Artists

Until 1969 artists could donate works to museums and other non-profit institutions and receive tax deductions. Due to subsequent reform, these deductions have been radically reduced. Consequently several bills have been proposed to restore full tax benefits to practicing artists.

Mr. Wade explained that a number of senators in cooperation with the Arts Endowment have given support to the concept of deduction; however, to the best of his knowledge, no action is being taken on proposed bills at present.

The group expressed interest in modification of tax laws for several reasons. For one, donations from artists have declined, and thus museums suffer. Also artists receive very little financial advantage from the booming art market.

Next Meeting

The Inter-Agency Committee will meet again, in Mr. Straight's office for lunch, on Monday, June 30, at noon.

The subjects of that session include old business: government indemnity and international art festivals, also a new topic will be discussed, i.e., folk art programming.

Information Agency confirmed that there was indeed an inter-agency committee, and that they got together regularly to discuss the "state of the arts". We were told to take the matter up with Caroline Millett at the State Dept., since she was the secretary for that committee. She is also Peter Solmssen's secretary.

From Ms. Millett we learned the names of the committee members; we also learned there were minutes from the meetings; we also learned that the Committee was, by and large, Michael Straight's baby, the meetings having been held in his office quite frequently. We asked for a full set of the minutes. She balked and would give us only the set which pertained to the arts legislation we had been researching; she did, however, inform us that, under the Freedom of Information Act, we were entitled to see the minutes—and why didn't we submit a request in writing. We did this, also requesting any correspondence between Mr. Solmssen's office and the various members of the Committee.

We then received a call from the State Dept. informing us that Mr. Solmssen's correspondence would cost $700 to retrieve, and that Ms. Millett wasn't the person to see about the minutes—Mr. Straight was. Since we didn't have $700, we decided to send Mr. Straight a request for the minutes. (The form of this request by the way, was suggested by a pamphlet on the Freedom of Information Act published by the ACLU. It was quite helpful, and it's free.)

To make a long story short, Mr. Straight wouldn't give us the minutes until we had a meeting with him—and even then he wouldn't. But the following transcript is an excerpt from the taped conversation we had with him:

Well, I don't think it makes any decisions as such, at all. It's just a working group of working level officials, none of whom make final decisions, but all of whom exchange information. So it's really a very informal group at that level. It had two or three reasons to get started, which came out of even more informal, just really one to one meetings, ad hoc meetings to discuss specific events.

Six or seven years ago the White House became interested in the question of international Biennale-type art exhibitions and who was responsible for them in terms of American participation. This was a preoccupation of various government agencies at various times. Obviously, it's a thing in which many concepts and standards are mixed. Let's say the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires says 'In our opinion it is very important to participate in the Biennale—artists feel differently, the State Department has its own sense of priorities, they don't have good (?) *relationships with artists as such.' So this concerned the White House at a time when it was actively interested through* (?) *the White House Advisor, who was originally of course (Roger) Stevens. His role was altered. Namely, Roger began by being (a) head of the (conference) center, (b) chairman of the endowment, (c) the President's special advisor. When Miss Hanks took his place she no longer continued as special advisor, but nonetheless, the White House interest in the arts continued, obviously. And so that special advisory liaison role passed to a White House advisor and assistant with particular interest in the arts among other things {and they were}, interested in this question of the Biennales. And the Biennales had gone, as you know, from USIA, and the Smithsonian and NCFA and were just mulling around when it was felt it was just too large a project for any specific agency to take on alone. In addition to them, the endowment, which is limited by law to promoting the arts within the United States, advancing the arts within the United States, is subject to that general boundary line drawn up by the Congress to distinguish our activities from those of the State Department, USIA which go before different congressional committees for oversight and appropriations. But nonetheless, obviously, we have constituents and grantees who are internationally known, who are internationally active. We are engaged in relationships with them, eleven or twelve months a year for two or three weeks or a month a year they may be involved with overseas activities which other agencies like USIA and State Department are widely concerned in their standards of performance, whether they could be available* or *not and they don't have the background or the general relationship that we do. So obviously at a working level there, we know dance companies, we know theatre companies in terms of standards of performance, availability, interest, general appeal. So there's a working relationship which exchanges,*

but, in no circumstances does a working interchange constitute a decision making body.

And the third element, which was of particular interest to us, was that if we have, let us say fellowships in particular, for which the government is making grants, to individuals to engage in creative activities and ask nothing in return and frequently we get letters back from the artists themselves saying in effect you should be taking more active interest in what we are doing with taxpayers' money, you should concern yourself with the results of your fellowship grants, not simply say you have the background, you are well recommended by professionals, we have taxpayers' funds for you and what you do with them is your own concern.

And I was particularly interested in the question of the international interest in American art and obviously more specifically in the art which is supported by the endowment. That is to say, if a photographer comes into the photography fellowship program, and submits an application for a fellowship on the basis of a project, let's say the project is to do a series of photographs on migratory workers in Southern California. This work, which may take up to a year of the photographer's time for which he receives a fellowship from the endowment, may be of great interest to photographers, general audiences in Mexico City, but there is no way in which, as things are now constituted, at the policy level or *the high level of officialdom, that the American Embassy, in Mexico City* or *the State Department or the USIA* or *the Smithsonian would know that a photographer in California has received an endowment grant to make this series of photographs which, had they known about it, would have fitted in very well with something they were planning to do or might do.* So *therefore the question arose, in my mind in particular, if we are taking taxpayers' money to put into projects of this kind, don't we owe it to taxpayers to attempt to evaluate a project and to see how what we've gotten can be given the maximum exposure and benefit to the American people first of all and secondly, to other peoples. So what that means is that while there are no strings attached, let's say, to the fellowship, while a given photographer or painter, sculptor may resent being approached by a political or ambassadorial arm of the United States government, we who are in touch with him artistically, professionally, nonpolitically, at the end of the term of their fellowships can say, now that your program is completed, we've gathered that it would be of great interest to French students at the Sorbonne. It would tie in with an exhibition which is being planned in the student quarter of contemporary photographs of, say, farm working conditions of the poor. Would you be willing to have your work processed and shown as part of the international exhibition of contemporary photography dealing with the conditions of the poor in Paris next year? And the artist of course, is always entitled to say no, I'm not at all interested, which is his perogative. I can't even tell you at this point where these things have come out, but what seems to me to be worthwhile is that we identify talent, which is what we are professionally charged with doing. And then it is a service to those individuals to attempt to make their work better known and these arbitrary lines which are established between the United States and other countries can be overcome at the working level by this kind of group and this was really the interest that I saw this kind of working committee having.* So *it makes no decisions, but we simply bring in,to the discussions with USIA, with State, and with the Smithsonian, people who describe to them the kind of fellowship program we've got going, the kind of work which is being done, what's happening in the dance world or experimental television for example. And once out of twenty-five times one of these will light a spark in somebody else's mind overseeing as to the fact that this is precisely what the international convocation [Venice] is now interested insofar as their government … seems to me that this is desirable to me from the artistic point of view in this country and it's also good for the country as a whole. So this kind informal thing goes on, in which we attempt to make known the people who are responsible for presentations of American ideas and achievements overseas. The kind of thing we're engaged in doing you see, is of interest to them. And that's really been the center of the discussions as far as I'm concerned. Other groups, the humanities for example, have come in on international scholarly exchanges or on specific questions that have come up, such as the common interest we all have in museum exhibitions, therefore indemnification. We have an interest in getting American work*

shown abroad, also European or Asian painters or sculptors being shown here. The humanities is also interested in that, the Smithsonian is also interested in that, the USIA, and the State Department are also interested in that, so we all have a common interest in the question of cutting down the cost to museums which we all service in one way or another. One substantial element of those costs is insurance. So if we can reduce the cost of insurance for them, we can have more exhibitions for the same amount of money or better exhibitions for the same amount of money. Thereby we all have an interest in attempting to approach a problem like the indemnification of the damage for works of art that suffer damage when they come to this country and tour around, or, of American works of art going overseas. This is a matter of common concern to all of us which we can discuss here at the working level and then make recommendations individually or *collectively to the people who do make the decisions on matters of government approach, let's say, the question of indemnifications—which has now gone through the Congress and will become law. But basically, it's sort of background information in terms of policy and why this whole thing functions and the kinds of things it does but it's an informal group which functions solely on the working level as I said, really makes no decisions as such. Those decisions as to whether to participate in the Venice Biennale, whether to go to Sao Paulo and so forth, are not decisions which we at the Endowment have anything to do with in the first place. The groups represented here are not the individuals who would make the decisions on behalf of their own departments. So at both levels this is not a decision making group. Well that sort of spells it out.*

When pressed on the issue of the minutes themselves, Mr. Straight replied:

Well all I can say on this matter—I think Bob will tell you, in his opinion this is not a formal agency of government. I am not the head of it. In the sense that I am the chairman of it, we provide lunch for the group, have no authority to speak for the group … it is all of them, it's their opinions that are being recorded, all of them are entitled to say what they feel should be done about that. That's up to them; obviously I cannot speak for them. Each one of *them, as far as I know, feels that the kind of frank exchange that goes on here means that they don't want the thing to be released as such, because they talk frankly about individuals, and projects and exhibitions … the problems attached to all of these things. So, if the minutes are to be available to everybody, plainly the discussions either become more formal or less frank. It's not because something is going on here I don't think, that we want to keep it confidential.*

Maybe Mr. Straight is right, maybe "nothing" *is* going on. But the evidence, what little we have, suggests otherwise. For one thing, by acting as a clearinghouse for cultural information (as if that were a neutral function politically), by *soliciting* individual artists for international shows on behalf of the State Dept., and surrepticiously so, the NEA does in fact expand its bureaucratic influence outside the national boundaries. This mayor may not be a technical violation of its legal powers; it would probably be difficult to prove one way or the other. But since Mr. Straight himself admits that the Committee was formed at least partially to facilitate the cultural policies of the State Dept., and the USIA (the question of Biennales and international exchanges in general), he suggests that the Committee does "something" of rather important political significance, that is, it discusses the links between our domestic cultural policies and our international cultural policies. And since the membership of the lAC is hardly arbitrary, there is some reason to believe that our domestic cultural policies are being increasingly *mediated* by foreign" policy considerations—which are, by and large, imperialistic.

After all, a good example of this mediation, aside from the issues already mentioned, is the "Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act" itself—which was drafted by the General Council of the NEA and the Council for the House Select Subcommittee on Education. This act was conceived as "domestic" legislation insofar as it was supposed to benefit the American people directly. But it obviously filters our domestic access to culture through the government's foreign policy of detente, etc. (since only *international* cultural exchanges are insured, and they are approved by the Secretary of State or his designee), while at the same time it insures the power and prestige of large, established institutions like museums (and probably even large museums, since they're

the ones with enough staff to put together these cultural extravaganzas). In this sense the NEA is throwing its weight behind domestic cultural policies, over which it has increasing control, which clearly benefit the government internationally. And this suggests centralised decision-making at relatively high levels (that is, capitalism isn't such a smoothly-oiled machine that culture, quite of its own accord, becomes an instrument of both domestic and international control).

Of course, the "Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act", Biennales, cultural exchanges, and museums aren't the only pies the NEA, and by implication the lAC, has its fiscal and bureaucratic fingers in. The point is, we're not likely to find out the extent of the lAC's powers. There were several reasons given why the rest of the minutes were unavailable. As Mr. Straight put it, it might inhibit the frank discussions which do go on. However, the U.S. courts have ruled that this isn't reason enough for withholding information. The "strongest" reason, the one Robert Wade (General Council for the NEA) used in the end, was that the Committee wasn't subject to the regulations of the Freedom of Information Act, that is, that it fell within an exempt category. As both Straight and Wade repeatedly stressed, the Committee is a working-level group, which meets for lunch; it makes no decisions as such, and it has no power or authority to do so. As they put it, it isn't a decision-making body since no consensus can be *directly* implemented as general policy. However, it's hard to deny the importance of each of these individuals in their respective agencies, and it's likely that each person's input into their respective agencies is frequently at the level of general policymaking. So in the end, by keeping the Committee one step removed from bureaucratic formalization, decisions about the organization of culture can go on without the possibility of "distracting" input; by denying its power to directly implement policies, the Committee can remain unaccountable (and virtually invisible) to anyone beside itself or other members of the Executive branch of the government.

New York, New York

HISTORY

DAVID RUSHTON & PAUL WOOD

Writing—and practicing—in a context where history is the tedious province of a group of academics, it is impossible ratiocinatively to undermine that inheritance and establish the *historicity of action*. Orthodox treatments of history are notoriously unrelated, either in respect of their internal relations, or between their 'subjects' and the context in which the accounting is itself being carried out. Two aspects of incompleteness are involved, which complement each other to produce cardboard, essentially dehistoricised histories: the episodic disjunctions which take place, and wrench 'incidents' or 'careers or 'styles' out of the process in terms of which it is alone possible to identify them (i.e. 'periodisation'); and the reification of 'Subjects' which illicitly isolates events from their socially ramified nexus, and instead substitutes putative explanations in terms of threads of restricted traditions. In coarse art school engagements the fruits of these operations are e.g. 'Impressionism' which is unsorted with respect to both its relations back before 'modern art' and its embeddedness in terms of e.g. positivism or the 2nd Empire. (Substitute, 'Constructivism' and the Revolution; Dada and the Weimar Republic; Formalism and the Cold War, etc., etc.). But even that is still only getting a surface grip on the issue. The point of 'realisation' is: why look at that anyway? What are the criteria in terms of which certain features of certain practices are elevated to prominence; what was their relation to the practices of those who propounded them (the history of history/criticism, etc.); what is the relation between *both* such a set of actions *(quasi-dingen-au-sich)* and the mediating 'critical' practices, and present practice, contextual demands, etc.

Since all actions are temporal, contextualised, and therefore to some degree determined in their significance and even identity; and since it would be easier to drown than swim in a sea of historical 'facts' (e.g. the ad hoc crudity of eclecticism), a theory of history is a sine qua non. Which means: there is no question of not having one. This is not saying 'search for a theory'. The only question is whether the theory which is actually being deployed remains implicit, and therefore almost certainly orthodox—constituted out of the dubious common sense of unreflective practices; or whether it results from an attempt to engage the gaps and contradictions of that inherited orthodoxy, to make it explicit, to treat it as a surface moment in the transition to a totalising sense of the historical and contextual embeddedness of activity, i.e. a historical theory enabling one to treat history as an instrument in the reflexive explication of one's own telos, in its—institutional—context. A need for theory; theory in the sense of a way of handling the processive, becoming nature of practice.

The orthodoxy, which is the context against which these remarks are framed, is implicitly arraigned against such an enterprise, in its full implications. It has to be, since a practice which grasps the nature of its becoming transcends the limitations of subjects, topics, and so forth which are the fabric of an irredeemably specialistic status quo; the more so insofar as such a practice, because of its activist, historically informed critical posture cannot be consigned to the limbo of individual interest—such a psychologistic reduction would be manifestly apparent. (Which isn't to say that the attempt isn't continually made).

A totalising conception of history, of

the sort suggested here, is not autotelic, self supporting; it is a weapon in the struggle to conceive 'ends'. The orthodox re-inforcement of history as a specialistic domain, which can at best, and then somewhat dubiously, be 'applied', leads to a practice unconscious of its social-historical placement, and thereby devoid of a framework in which to conceive ends. Or not quite—there is one possibility left open for the orthodox: the struggle for ends can be carried out in the sphere of re-ificd Values i.e. quasi-theologically … idealism. (Think of formalism—'art as functionless', 'art as the pursuit of Quality' etc). The statement should be revised, then: a practice devoid of non-transcendental framework of ends, a practice condemned to the barrenness of the Absolute, a practice erecting its de-historicised transcendent God in whose glance it then alone makes sense to go on. But don't forget Feuerbach—the god is the creation of men, of orthodoxy, in this case of specialistic psychologising orthodoxy; and as such it has a function: its functionlessness is its function.

This is why the struggle to realise history is confused, and interpenetrative at all levels. But it is also why it is resolvable. It is not made in a vacuum. It is framed in a context of a specific order: *this* context. This is the context and it is therefore a determinant upon that theory-which-is-possible. This means that criteria are available; and we can escape the equally barren—but nonetheless increasingly evident—antithesis to classical orthodoxy.

Classical orthodoxy is the objectivism which posits a 'hard core of facts surrounded by interpretations,' i.e., that a neutral account is available irrespective of the point of view, the socio-economic i.e., class situation, of the author of the account. It has been pointed out (pace von Wright) that there is something of an irony contained in the very idea of a positivist theory of history. Positivism is constitutionally disposed towards the natural sciences, and there has been, according to e.g., Collingwood, what amounts to a conspiracy of silence on the historicity of science (which has only recently been questioned). But just as it has been said that platonism is the naive philosophy of mathematics—in the sense that it is one implicitly held to by mathematicians—so it might be the case that positivism embodies several of the conceptions of the 'naive' historian. For example, that a notion of *the* truth is accessible, or that before advancing to an explanation it is possible to describe—to use a Wittgensteinian argument in another context, he is liable to believe he can leave everything as it was. But when an attempt is made to put these commonsense rules of thumb on a systematic basis, foundational difficulties crop up which seem to force their rejection as methodological criteria. Far from there being such a two-tier external relation between, as it were, the essential and the accidental in the sphere of historical actions (objects, practices), there is an internal indivisibility: not merely in respect of the fact that the use of language precludes presuppositionless access to 'data', but also in that the selection of material out of the infinity of actions as contenders for historical explanation proceeds on the basis of judgements—moreover, judgements of interests. This is not to say that historical explanation is devoid of facticity, rather that there is an integral dialectic, including 'accepted judgements' without which no purchase can be got on the notion of facts or interpretations. "The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one which is very hard to eradicate" Furthermore, the implications of this do not rest at the level of truisms about human fallibility, or about the inherent bias of 'human nature' in virtue of the embeddedness of perceiving subjects in the social flux. In the quest for a solid foundation away from the feared metaphysics of interpretation, objectivist historians were led, in a manner which should by now be familiar, to base their accounts on—in fact to orient them around-the individual. It has been shown that "this view of history fitted in perfectly with the empiricist tradition", that it "had a close affinity with the economic doctrine of laissez-faire" and was equally the product of the self-assuredness of expanding capitalism. Its individualism bolstered the ideology of this, then new, ideology, and as such can be seen in terms of a specific stage of historical development. But the question changes in the move from early to late capitalism. What was then perhaps an homogenous, and, in the context of the

struggle against feudalism, progressive ideology, has now subsided, in the form of arguments bifurcating 'individuals' and 'society' treating them as ex hypothesi antagonistic in their interests (rather than, say, mutually supportive), into a false opposition, in fact "the slogan of an interested group". That is to say, the argument for the independence of facts from contextual considerations, in the potential neutrality and descriptive freedom of the commentator, has itself been caught in the transformations of contexts: requiring an enormous consensus—a certain society—in order to found its objectivist pretence, it is now the victim of the break-up of that consensus, and mirrors only the interests of a specific group. A group whose continued presumption of the transparency of the historical process now only renders it fit subject matter for an ideologically sensitive history: the transparency of history stands revealed as a historical ideology.

It is not surprising therefore that in the light of the growing gap between aspirations to objectivity, and the social conditions in which those aspirations are systematised into disciplines, that is, objectified, a viewpoint has evolved which certainly reveals a once more close affinity between its own methods and self image and the conditions it faces. Liberal pluralism has become dominant in all those fields concerned with human action, whether past (history), exotic (anthropology), or contemporary (sociology). It has of course proceeded by way of a criticism of objectivist pretensions. The only real effect this has for anyone trying to construct a critical practice is that it means he has a more sophisticated and resilient orthodoxy to deal with; one which exhibits fatalism and selfconsciousness rather than the assuredness bred of imperialist expansion. As Adorno said of liberal pluralism in the form it takes as 'Sociology of Knowledge', it "calls everything into question and criticises nothing … a gesture of innocuous scepticism", and in so doing pays lip-service to the autonomist pretensions of its intellectual supporters. The point is that relativism works very well as a defence but is useless for the task of criticism, in fact can be used very effectively to deflate criticism and seemingly render it out of place. In the wider social sphere, the societal solipsism this ultimately invites can be conveniently an altogether coarser order. But, on the assumption that we are not, at the moment, operating in the sphere of the so-called 'critique of weapons', the problem is to try and handle the fatalism induced for attempts at critique by liberal pluralism.

It is impossible to do this internally; and this is one reason for the collapse of critical dialogue construed as a definitively rational pursuit. The contradictions of pluralism lie not in its delicately resigned playing-off of ideologies against each other—every one as equivalently a construct, but one inescapably necessary, per naturem humanitas, amen—so much as in its failure to sketch in its own material relations. Pluralists look good when pointing to the 'contradictions' of e.g. Marxism, which supposedly calls everything else an ideology, and false for that, while claiming an objectivity for its own analyses. But they are not so convincing when they lecture about, say, 'so many points of view to describe conflict Y', when what they presuppose is precisely their own untainted ability to paint such a picture of vieing ideologies. That is to say they presuppose as transparent and available that which Marxism at least tries to articulate as a problem—that material interests are a directing influence on consciousness, and that intellectuals are in no way exempt from interests. Mannheim's 'free floating intellectuals' fall straight into the jaws of Marx's analysis of class interest.

Certainly pluralism marks an advance over neutral objectivity insofar as it is apparently conscious of the role of ideologies. But the question is, to what extent is the handling of this topic which pluralism offers, illusory, actually mystificatory—that is, false consciousness? The problem starts to resolve its terms around the ever present empiricism of liberal theory. It doesn't matter that the bourgeois intelligentsia has come to be cautious about its 'objectivity' whilever they merely proceed to 'individualise' collectivities. That is to say, just as the intentionally expressed wants of individuals are treated as inviolate, so it largely is with the 'societies' of which developed liberal theory treats: they are so many data. Analysis can proceed to classify and categorise these collectivities/societies etc being seen as

a fluid stage of becoming, the function of some social telos, and as such possible objects of criticism in terms of a criticism of those ends, they are re-ified; they become the new Given.

Needless to say, these criticisms cannot be articulated in empiricist terms. What empiricism, even in its pluralist form, picks up is surfaces. While it is not denied that the surface is an objective moment in the whole, and must be included in its conception, the point is that the surface is also the phenomenon of a process taking place behind it. "To remain on the surface and become enraptured by the 'immediacy of its being' is to fall into pure illusion". This notion of the whole is inaccessible to any method which starts out from actuality conceived as appearance—and there is ample evidence that the disciplines ranging over human action, the erstwhile 'humanities', have made just such a pact with the actual. It follows that no matter how rigorous the statistical methods developed, nor how hard-headed and 'factual' the explanations may be, in the absence of a standard of significance against which to set social praxis (out of which the 'facts' are separated), analysis will remain at the level of recording symptoms. c.f. Adorno: "Even the implacable rigour with which criticism speaks the truth of an untrue consciousness remains imprisoned against the orbit of that against which it struggles, fixated on its surface manifestations". Thus bourgeois sociology and historiography. In their discussion of the notion of 'socially necessary costs' (i.e. of some form of production), Baran and Sweezy make the same point: that contemporary theory has abdicated from the confrontation of actuality with potentiality, and exemplifies an obsession with surface which places such a comparison beyond its grasp. This lacuna is covered in the jargon as a 'rejection as unscientific'; its actual function is conformist and quietistic. In short, no criterion is deployed by orthodox theory (in fact no such criterion is *deployable)* such that some (lived) status quo could ever be conceived as contingent. That is from the 'inside' (ie. of developed capitalism). As for the 'outside' of course, liberal theorists will have no such qualms about accounting ideologies and social forms as relative—especially when their own is under no threat: but in the continuing absence of such a criterion the effect is the same. No rational choice of ideologies is available; but the rub is that we happen, since we exist, to be *in* one. The inescapable implication coming off pluralism is: accept it.

The fundamental point is that an empiricist methodology presupposes a subject-object split. This remains just as much the case for a pluralist empiricism as for a monistic objective one, and therefore the dialectic of fact and interpretation, hence with judgements and values, is inconceivable. It follows that the notion of ideology—or world pictures—which is apparently used by liberal pluralist theory, is hardly an adequate notion at all: on an empiricistic base, the mediations between e.g. society and individual, fact and interpretation, which underlie a notion of ideology, are inaccessible; even if, as frequently happens, a connection is smuggled in ('Of course people are affected by what goes on around them … ') the pluralism is no more effective because the connection itself remains beyond analysis. No pivot is available in terms of which to assess it—it is simply there. Of course this is very attractive—it smacks of a harsh anthropocentric realism. The point is that relinquishing the notion of criteria of significance cannot do other than generate an acceptance of that which is. If no rational grounds are available for disputing a set of norms, or adherence to them, then utilitarianism merely re-emerges at a social level. 'What will you be happiest doing?' (Or: 'What's in it for me?'). If you happen to be happiest dissenting—that's just the way your mind works. It has nothing to do with the constitution of reality. So: either liberal quietism accepts that it is conformist in methodological bias; or it has to have recourse to the 'free floating' notion, which is transparently idealistic and undialectical. The choice is between a reified and idealistic set of criteria, or criteria acknowledging their materialistic embeddedness (and interrelatedness—that they are dialectical between actor and context): ie. between, in theoretical terms, Hume/Kant and Hegel/Marx.

When E. H. Carr says that "the social sciences as a whole, since they involve man as both subject and object, both investigator and

thing investigated, are incomparable with any theory of knowledge which pronounces a rigid divorce between subject and object", he is doing more than saying that liberal empiricism is in trouble. He is acknowledging that epistemology is a determinant on practice. This has a positive as well as a negative side. The implication is that the epistemology and the practice should be explicitly related. A transformational practice requires more than an individualistic notion of ends and expression contingently mapped onto a disposition to dissent from norms. It requires an epistemology which is not confined to the surface features of collectivity.

If 'objectivity'—qua 'hard core of facts'-— is untenable, then the recent and popular alternative to that, i.e., liberal relativism isn't tenable either. It is the theory of pessimistic declining capitalism, and reflects this in the practical impotence which its relativism inflicts on its adherents. 'Anything goes'. This too ignores the a priori embeddedness of practice. If anything goes, orthodoxy will continue to hold sway: by definition, there's more of it around. The only theory which acknowledges and attempts to grasp the transformational imperative (and the implicit 'interest' of orthodoxy itself) is historical materialism. The objectivity which is held out there is not of the unmediated order of crude empiricism. It proceeds from the embeddedness of practice, and the need to transform that practice: "historical thinking is always teleological". There are two major difficulties in the overthrow of objectivism and its vaunting of 'the facts'. These are, firstly, the straightforward sceptical relativity which argues that since interpretation is unavoidable no interpretation has any status over and above any other (the direction in which liberal pluralism tends). And secondly, which in some respects is an extension of the first, that since the interpretation determines the nature of that which is interpreted, and since (this is where the divergence occurs) the interpretation is determined by the conditions in which it is made, that accounting for the past is—or may as well be—structured with contemporary aims in mind. That is, a crudely opportunistic pragmatism can result.

It has to be seen that stressing the teleologically bound determination of history or seeing history 'as an instrument in the reflexive explication of one's own telos', is not to fall into the second trap, to advocate crude pragmatism—or even the sinister distortion of Heidegger. It is to acknowledge that all practice takes place in social contexts, including 'intellectual' (and 'artistic') practice, and that therefore there is no possibility of abstension between the alternatives of perpetuation and transformation. The rationalisation of a critique of ends, at the expense of an anarchic kingdom of ends insulated from rational questioning, far from promising the sacrifice of truth to expediency or whatever, opens up a wider area for discursive practice: shared dialogue which has a hope of transforming the conditions under which it goes on, instead of being confined to accepting the conditions and taking up minor, essentially internal, points. It is "with the cult of the 'positive' (that) reason surrenders to irrationality". "If we look into (Popper's) prescription of 'piecemeal social engineering' we shall see how limited is the role he assigns to reason".

Historical materialism, on the other hand, tries to encompass both its origin—in the situation of social praxis, why it emerged, what objective features of context and ideology face it, etc; and its possible context of 'application': i.e. to construct a relation between understanding and transformation.

Why then 'Theory and Practice', when we have gone on for so long without overtly mentioning, and dealing with it, as a problem? Basically because to proceed in that way would be doing precisely what Adorno calls translating dialectical concepts into classificatory ones. A theoretical treatment of the inherited problematic of 'theory and practice' would resolve nothing. It is, for example, the sort of activity that could quite painlessly go on in any department, such as ego a General Studies department, set up within the existing college education structure. Treating theory/practice theoretically would be non transformational, a most ironic example of the insidious quietism bred by positivistic categories and method. Theory and practice, as problems, and the disjunctions and contradictions between them, do not subsist at the cardboard level

of 'what goes on in the aesthetics books and magazines' as against 'what goes on in the studios, galleries and art schools'. All of these activities incorporate both dimensions, and it is there in practice that the gaps arise—not as subjects for ratiocinative pseudoclarification, but as dangerous lacunae to be engaged and transformed in practice: so that the practice which emerges as a function of reflexive purchase on its origins and ends is substantially different from that which went before—viz. romantic, positivist orthodoxy.

It would be erroneous to advocate taking notice of pragmatic constraints on practice—on mental as on manual labour—and then to produce an item or pursue a methodology indistinguishable from those requested by academic tradition. Critique cannot afford to treat the possibility of its success as contingent. Most criticism which is not merely parasitic upon its objects has been vaccinated against a belief in persuasion: since it is not merely a particular theory, but the generalised picture of theory—its function, its relation to practice, the (apparently) complete absence of any entertainment of reflexivity within that practice—which is, as it were, the 'object'. One isn't going to get anywhere by (i) pursuing expectations internal to the model (playing the game) or (ii) by expecting one's own expectations of rationality, embedded in a different model, to be fulfilled. A belief in the potential of reasoned argument to actually change action might be regarded as an index of rationalistic naivete. It seems that only in a framework devoid of any 'sociological' realism can exclusive stress be laid on the ability of, for example, facts to disprove theories: presuming as it does a clarity and immanence to the relationship of understanding which, although perhaps a property of the so-called community of equal and rational observers, is an abstraction with no counterpart in the real world. The treatment of efficacy as centrally to do with rationality and naturalness can itself be viewed as a construct of piecemeal empiricism (and its socio-political dimension), inasmuch as the argument that coarser factors mediate understanding and action relies on an acceptance of a level of interaction between contextual constraints and logical possibility which is inaccessible to the normal empiricist (ie. naturalistic fallacy and two-valued logic).

It is consonant with historical materialism to maintain that praxis, in the sense of a reflexive activity i.e., that which presumably one strives to bring about, is distinct from alienated labour—whether it be crude practice or academic theory—which lack any account of their origins or teleology. Therefore it has to be maintained that a dimension of praxis is the attempt to resolve its context of application. It might be possible to subsume this dimension as the assurance of a learning context i.e., it is where a notion of education enters. What's going on in examining the context in which work is located is that one moves through history to try and clarify a tractable possibility of education.

What this is suggesting is that this problem is not a messy or coarse one beyond our purview. But that the framing of a set of critical remarks carries the responsibility to approach it; that the two problems of articulating a dissent, and the pragmatics of ensuring that the dissent is effective, are one i.e., the problematic of a coherent social praxis. The relationship of individuals to information, out of which such notions as 'understanding', 'knowledge' and 'consciousness' are derived, is not immanent or transparent; it is mediated by social forms which extend ideological controls over the possibilities of knowledge. A form of organisation is required for understanding which is not spontaneous or self-generating. Embedding in a form of life—a point in the process of production—does not, as it were, transitively necessitate an understanding of the process of production. It may confer the possibility, which would be denied to someone the conditions of whose existence are formed essentially outside the process of production, in terms of consumption; but the actualisation of the possibility requires more abstract forms of learning to penetrate the opacity in which ideology shrouds the conditions of practice. The problem is to some extent made more complex by the fact that there is not one monolithic 'Production', but many forms of production, some relatively superstructural (eg. messing about in art schools); but that itself makes things more concrete—the problem of consciousness becomes less abstract, not one of

a hazy 'production in general' but of knowing the conditions of that form of production in which one works, and its relation to others equally concrete—out of which a generalised consciousness might then emerge.

The base/superstructure model is fundamentally alright here: while it is not, in so-called vulgar Marxist fashion, a matter of the superstructure simply or crudely reflecting or being determined by the economic base, nonetheless in the last instance that *is* the determinant.

Adorno and others have shown that the base/superstructure relation needs handling with caution, and in many important respects its significance is altered, or at least redrawn, by the conditions of monopoly capital and 'social democracy'; but any theories (not only the obvious elitist modernism, but also the 'moderates' of liberal-cultural democracy) which attempt to carve out a formative or society changing role for art, or any cultural aspect, are themselves, in the last instance, prescriptions for idealism; that is to say they are reactionary. They can end up by substituting a mythical 'consciousness' for the only consciousness which is authentic and concrete, viz, class consciousness: consciousness of one's class position, in the relations of production and vis a vis the ideology of the class which endorses the continuance of them. This can only be arrived at by a knowledge of economic, social, and historical forces (Althusser's "instinct" notwithstanding), and that not passive or academic but synthesised in action to transform them. Art, qua historical item/practice may be a partial object of this knowledge; and—qua social practice—may be a factor in generating and transmitting it and transforming social practice. (It's important to point out, before any chests get the chance to swell that this is precisely what art fails to do at the moment. If it is possible to treat such institutionalized catastrophe as social practice at all, it is only to' reveal its function as a provisor of fragments—epistemological, psychological, historical, sociological; thus, as re-inforcer of bourgeois ideology; thus, as paradigmatically aligned *against* transformations. Try treating 'reproduction of the relations of production' as a form of counter-going on.) But art is respectively neither the whole of (or even a primary part of this knowledge, nor is it qua practice, a prime mover in transforming social relations. It is, at most, a fragment of the social and historical relations to be known and understood in constituting class consciousness, and a partial complement—incomplete 'in itself'—of mass, class action to transform social reality.

Althusser argues that the implications of the 11th Thesis on Feuerbach are not towards a 'philosophy of praxis' but towards a new practice of philosophy. That is, towards a transformational practice which has embedded within it the evolving consciousness of its infusion by assumptions, norms, historically determined expectations, class interests, and so forth—in short, by ideology. The sole teleology being, insofar as this latter is inescapably bourgeois ideology, its *aufbebung* i.e. it being 'negated, fulfilled and surmounted, in one'.

This is not to say that there are not substantial problems in the notions of 'theory' and 'practice'; nor that attempting to handle contradictions and lacunae embodied in them mightn't itself be a significant practical act, in some context. It depends in fact on the context and circumstances of the present practice. Obviously, in attempting to sort out a critical practice, in, say, the context of an art course; or more likely, in the context of the agitation which that attempt necessarily brings along with it, since the context is one of an antithetically disposed and officially sanctioned positivist orthodoxy, various assumptions, presuppositions etc. will be brought to bear—some of which either implicitly or explicitly will concern the status of 'theoretical' considerations vis a vis the practice (of ego students on the course). Just as obviously it cannot be a bad thing to try and sophisticate one's understanding of the issues involved. Both Adorno and Habermas say something similar: Adorno—"dialectics also includes the relation between action and contemplation". Habermas—"the system of action and experience refers us in compelling manner to a form of communication in which participants … do not direct or carry out action … instead they search for arguments or offer justifications". But the point is that for (say) students in such a situation the problem is more an empirical one than it is an epistemological

one. The intransigent murkiness of the relation between ego the 'emancipatory interest of knowledge' and the holistic claims of reflective theory is far from irrelevant when it comes to articulating a set of demands; or even carrying out critique. Anyone can read Habermas and try to sort it out for themselves (in fact if, as is likely, this involves a collective action it could, simply as that, be a significant overthrow of erstwhile individualistic norms). But that would not be the whole point: sorting out such difficulties of an epistemological or theoretical order can be the acme of academicism—how 'transformational' is the sorting out that goes on in most philosophy departments (or General Studies departments, etc.?)

The question answers itself. If, to stick with the terms of the example, the group did not attempt to sort out the consequences and implications of its coming together as a group—rather than restricting themselves falsely to ego the implications of 'interests' for 'knowledge'—then not only might they just as well not have bothered coming together: there is a real sense in which they *will have* carried on in the same way and not done anything different. A transformational attempt to generate a collective or critical practice, against the background norms of individualist positivist orthodoxy, supposes far more than asking questions about its own practice, changes in that practice, implications, etc. Hence the primarily 'empirical' nature of the problem of theory and practice for radical/critical groups. Find out how theory and practice have been handled, by all means; but don't forget to look at what the implications were for the person who conducted the discussion, what his situation was, whether it changed as a result, and so forth. And most important, don't forget that in the act of looking at 'theory and practice' you have performed an action which, in the context, is rich in practical consequences. The index of the transformativeness of your practice will be in terms of how those practical consequences are taken up and dealt with; not in terms of how 'sophisticated' one is vis a vis 'theoria', 'praxis', 'poesis' etc., etc.

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ON THE CLASS CHARACTER OF ART

GORAN DJORDJEVIC

"The wretchedness of religion is at once an expression of and a protest against real wretchedness. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is a demand for their true happiness". (K. *Marx—A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right)*

The known history of human society is principally a history of class relations. The ruling class, controlling the existing productive forces and relations of production, also seek to control the existing relations in other spheres of human activity. The presence of organized religious consciousness is quite understandable in those forms of social organization in which direct control (above all, economic) of the few over the majority of the members of society is allowed.

The existence of religious consciousness was basically always manifested by the acknowledgment and acceptance of the existence of the following concepts: Absolute, Universal, Ideal, Eternal: which leads to a spontaneous assertion of one of its elementary concepts usually known under the name of God. These concepts represent attributes that primarily relate to the concept of God. I feel that it is also necessary to name another very important divine attribute and that is the concept of creation "from nothing" (ex nihil). By the present knowledge of relations in nature (including man and society as forms of its expression) it seems there is not just *one* phenomenon with which we could relate the concept of creation. This bring us also to the conclusion that this concept only has any sense if the concept 'God' has. Put simply, a being that exists as a result without a cause is the only being that can create. (The human being is certainly not that being.)

It is understandable why the appearance of early capitalism corresponds roughly to the decrease of the authority of God. The social consciousness then current placed man in a particularly inferior (humiliating) position in respect to God and did not correspond to the then new productive forces. The still young bourgeoisie encouraged the view of strong, powerful and exceptional men who are above the other members of society. These men have gained their position in society thanks, above all, to "exceptional" qualities. It is interesting that during this period there appears,a definite consciousness of the Artist and of Art. The Artist is an exceptional, particularly gifted and talented man who, thanks to his capability for creating has to acceed to Ideal, Eternal, Universal, Absolute values (i.e. to attain God).

The renaissance of Antique Gods, bearing human qualities is necessary for the making of the model of an exceptional man with divine characteristics (superman). So, art as "creative" activity (by of course "exceptional" men), serves as yet one more "proof" of the justifiability of given class relations. On the one hand we have the human being biologically, economically, sociologically, psychologically, profoundly conditioned; on the other stands his spiritual opposite and (unfortunately)

his ideal, the being possessing the absolute qualities of—God.

Especially in past centuries, art represents a specific document on the primeval struggle in man between the aspiration to reach the supernatural and natural possibilities—the divine and the human. This process was conditioned by the degree of development of productive forces and the relations of production, and the results of this process were used to justify and confirm these relations. Thus: art in its real and practical function was *and remains* one of the instruments of the ruling class in the process of the forming of consciousness and in the process of governing the majority. Revolutionary change of the social order is primarily conditioned by qualitative changes in the relations of production. Thus the control over labour and its fruits would be fundamentally altered.

The decentralisation of society and the possibility of direct decision making over the results of one's own work, offers conditions for the establishment of more humane relations between people and between man and his environment, thereby permitting a greater degree of liberty for each member of society as well as for the community in general. I feel that supporting and producing art that is a result of class relations (in the service of the ruling class) is a way of expressing reactionary consciousness in a society which is working on building new interpersonal relations (eg. as in our society).

Take the character and role of art in a totalitarian society: it does not represent art's degradation, on the contrary it shows art's true face which in other circumstances is more or less successfully masked. In capitalist society, since the functioning and organisation of art are based on the interests of the ruling class the demand for the abolishment of support for such an activity and the demand for its overcoming, as consciousness as well as activity, are conditioned by the demand for a qualitative change, of relations of production and of the positions of those forces in society to which art is necessary. This is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. Apart from the qualitative change in the relations of production, it is indispensable to clearly determine the reactionary character of the artistic consciousness and activity, this provides conditions for the overcoming of that consciousness and that activity on the level of society—achieved primarily by denying material support to the parasitic mechanism and system of institutions that seek and have the right to possess these alienated means thanks to the existence of the results (products) of artistic activity—the work of art—and thanks to the very affirmative, existing, relation of socialist society towards art. In countries that are building socialist relations in society, not only is the class character of the artistic consciousness not understood, on the contrary this consciousness is upheld and asserted through corresponding activities that in fact mean permitting the existence of those forces and mechanisms which by their nature have very little in common with the true endeavours for better, more humane relations in society and for a greater degree of freedom for every human being in that society. I believe that the decision about accepting or rejecting art, considered as consciousness as well as activity on an individual level, is an inalienable right of every human being that should not be questioned, as is also the case with the individual right to expression of the other forms of religious consciousness in socialist society.

That which is indispensable to our society at this moment is a truly critical analysis of the whole cultural inheritance, from the point of view of the essential need of our community. (I'm thinking here of the educational system in particular). At the same time we must seek new forms of activity, new ways of thought, that would be the result of a consciousness of the real, natural possibilities and tendencies of the human being in the sense of augmenting the degree of individual and collective freedom.

(Art is primarily the results of an illusion of freedom, and not a way of expressing the liberties of the human being. Every activity of which the goal is the assertion of an artistic consciousness represents at the same time the prolongation of that illusion.)

It is necessary to free ourselves from the

primeval fear of the Unknown (which is really a function of economic, sociological, psychological and other factors) for fear of the Unknown is the basic precondition for the appearance of any form of religious consciousness. We must understand and truly accept that the Unknown is also nature. In a certain way it is our own nature.

The call to abandon illusions about their conditions is the call to abandon a condition which requires illusions." (K. Marx—A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right).

Belgrade, Yugoslavia

SOCIOLOGICAL ART AS UTOPIAN STRATEGY

HERVE FISCHER

I

Art is ideological production in class society. The practice of art, if it remains marginal in relation to an established, repressive system of dominant ideology, offers the possibility of contesting this dominant society and its technological, bureaucratic structures. In this way, it is a practice of negative utopianism directed against the bourgeois order.

This situation of art and this possibility are fundamental to the theoretical development and practice of sociological art. The traditional problems of an aesthetic formalism, which expressed reconciliation with God or Society, which beautified ugliness, and which throughout the course of history constantly compromised itself with the ideology of the dominant class, doesn't interest us anymore, except as the historical object of an ideological criticism—a demystification liberating today's practice of art.

It is clear that such a project supposes a precise theoretical analysis, based on historical materialism, of the relation between art and society. It is a matter of investigating the traditional political function of art, in order to determine the function we want to assign to sociological art in bureaucratic, consumer society. It is also a matter of questioning the idea of art as an expression of poetry, of imagination, and of the irrational—an idea which hides, and badly, the power of bourgeois idealism. Furthermore, we have to realize that founding the theory and the practice of art on sociological analysis doesn't necessarily lead to science or positivism, the chronic sin of Marxism. For we think that a theory is also an ideological concept whose purpose is the exercise of power in the world. Assuming that everything is ideological—including Marxism, sociological art, mathematics, etc., because they are all tied to the structures and value-systems of the society which produces them—it is fitting to dialectically pit theory against practice and practice against theory, to confront the imaginary with the rational and the rational with the imaginary. And in this regard, one must be careful of an empirical pragmatism, very commonplace in Anglo-Saxon culture, which attempts to make a positivistic discourse out of sociology in order to organize and manipulate society. One must also be wary of the linguistic illusion that language is an autonomous domain with its own internal structures of meaning, a model from which generalizations can supposedly be developed for the analysis of reality

It is clear that art, if it is a language, differs from the kind of analysis presupposed by most conceptual art, which considered it as a linguistic fact, more than as an ideological, that is, sociological fact. We have to consider art as a *message*, as the area of contextual interference between the intention of the creator (the artist) and the level of reading (codes and perceptions) of the perceiver (the public). We don't know what language per se is. For language is the arena of ideological power and social conflicts.

The interrogative and critical function of sociological art is related to the idea, formulated by Adorno *(Aesthetical Theory* and most importantly *The Negative Dialectic)* and by Marcuse *(Counterrevolution and Revolt)*, of art as a negative utopia. Different from the Hegelian or Marxist dialectic which affirms that the negation of negation results in a positive synthesis, the dialectic proposed by Adorno and reaffirmed by Marcuse suggests that the negation of the negation (negation of bourgeois society by Marxist theory itself denied in its totalitarian and bureaucratic effects) gives way to *critical theory*, a questioning of society which affirms the possibility of *another* society without wanting (or being able) to specify the model.

This attitude seems close to that of American radical New Left, found in the intellectual and student milieu, which refuses to ally itself with any party apparatus or organized group, but which nevertheless violently criticizes the prevailing system. Similarly, the *collectif d'art sociologique* refuses to associate itself with French political parties, either socialist or communist, and focuses its criticism not only on the bourgeois order but also on the models and dogmas of the leftist parties, even if objectively it approves of their political criticism.

It seems that art was traditionally a system of responses glorifying the dominant political system—to the glory of God, of his representatives on earth, military leaders, kings, or today captains of industry in bourgeois society. This is what Marcuse calls "affirmative culture". But this, like Adorno, in a viewpoint still too colored by idealism, makes a considerable error in historical analysis. By affirming that art is always antagonistic in its aesthetic form, even if the content agrees with the prevailing social system, the aesthetic form (beauty) resolving the social contradictions that it unmistakably expresses. Such a belief errs by searching for justification in an intellectual reading of artistic images (aesthetic theory) without relation to the real political function of art in an aristocratic or bourgeois society. It's only since Dada that certain artists have systematically used art as means of challenging the social order, including the aspect of aesthetic form. (Neither Goya, nor Callot, nor Daumier, nor the Impressionists challenged both the form and the content of painting for contesting society; as for the Futurists, they searched for a new agreement between art and mechanical society, which led to Fascism. Delacroix said that "painting must be a feast for the eye", Matisse wanted painting to be "comfortable like a good armchair".)

To question the value system, the political system is a real pedagogic task. (In this regard, if we use images or objects in certain cases, it is fitting to underline that the question here is one of pedagogic materials which are not fetishable, not sellable and not at all works of art, but messages about art, even though we exploit this ambiguity at the level of interrogative communication.) This pedagogy aims at criticizing the ideology of bourgeois art. In a class society it is clear that there can't be art which is politically neutral or innocent. One must fight against artists who declare that we live henceforth beyond historical conscience, in a society which denies history. But this mustn't nonetheless, be authoritarianism. What counts isn't the inculcation of a good leftist conscience, the dogmas about what one must think against racism, injustice, exploitation, alienation, but putting everyone—ourselves included—in the position of thinking for ourselves. This negative pedagogy aims at pointing questions, not at teaching answers. Its purpose could be formulated as this: by outdistancing, to give rise to a disalienating awareness or "taking of consciousness"; to favor a self-direction of thought. Each person takes charge of the entire responsibility for their own thought instead of submitting themselves to the pre-directed thought which their society offers them in abundance.

There is no doubt 'that this questioning, because it interrogates affirmative systems that don't want to be interrogated, appears subversive. To pose the question of sense in a society which doesn't tolerate "dangerous" questioning is doubtless, beyond sociological analysis, to pose a philsophical question. This is inevitably subversive. And this sort of philosophy is rarely done. In their own ways, Nietzsche, Reich, Marcuse, Adorno, Illich, Henri Lefebvre, the French Situationists have all posed this philosophical question.

These few recollections have aimed at explaining the idea of a utopic artistic practice.

II

Let's go on to the concept of art as a strategy. This utopian practice inserts itself in a given, constraining social reality where art is inevitably embroiled in all sorts of contradictions—not something to be modestly hidden, but on the contrary something which it is fitting to reveal. It is not a question of attaching oneself to the mast of a ship like Ulysses in order to enjoy, without danger, the song of the Sirens, while the sailors, their ears plugged with wax, obscurely row. It is not a question of keeping to an abstract theory and avoiding practice, like Kant's philsopher.

Practice is absolutely necessary and no longer poses the problem of its aesthetic, but of its strategy. How can one act in the social field to change it? Those who refuse such a project; on the pretext that there must first be political revolution at the level of the economic infrastructures, are making too simple an analysis. In effect, it is clear that the working class is no longer a revolutionary class in advanced, industrial society; it has become middle class-bourgeois-ized. Must one, then, count on the ethnic minorities and people of the third world to make this preliminary revolution? Maybe, but certainly not with our culture which imposes on them an imperialism as questionable as the ancient religious proselytism whose fate was linked with colonialism. Further, as Marcuse suggests, one must hope that the economic crises of capitalism—and we, will add, for the socialist countries the excesses of the bureaucratic system, of repression—will permit a breach, a rupture in the system, assuring the development of new values (an end to repression, more self-direction of thought, less alienation of time and space) which the New Left, while waiting, strives to think about and to use to confront the present system.

To prepare the way for a cultural revolution while waiting for the crisis of the infrastructure offers the occasion to act. Certainly, the events of May 68 in France didn't lead to a political success. But it must also be remarked that the balance from an ideological point of view remains largely positive.

The fear that revolutionary struggle against the system favors the risk of installation of a fascist regime to fight against the disorder is unrealistic in democratic, bourgeois countries. The danger of technocratic over-repression appears much more immanent in these democracies in which the institutions copy cybernetic mechanics and permit the same informative control.

Finally, one can estimate that the superstructures aren't only a reflection of the infrastructures, that they simply reproduce, but rather that there exists a dialectic relationship between infrastructures and superstructures such that art practice which acts on a crucial ideological field may have future effects on the social organization of work. It is fitting not to neglect the dialectic of cultural practice and to avoid interpreting Marxism exclusively as economics.

How is the substitution of the concept of strategy (for traditional requirements of aesthetics or of the invention of new forms) translated into practice in the project of sociological art? Let's examine the consequences according to their different aspects: methodological, economic, institutional and, according to their different modes: deviance, perversion, refusal.

From a methodological point of view, sociology can hardly help us, because of the fact that most of the methods that it elaborates only serve to verify and manipulate social groups in favor of the political or economic power which finances their surveys. We must invent methods of making communicative dialogue and animation dynamic, for debate is always the goal in the practice of sociological art.

We might note here our notion of the ideological pharmacy, where the artist, changed into a pharmacist offers pills for voting, for happiness, for travel by subway, for forgetfulness. This situation provides the opportunity for lengthy, informal discussion. Or imagine the practice of "the office of utopian identity" where the artist assumes the rule of bureaucrat and establishes by direct conversations with individuals a fictional identity card which principally shows what the

person questioned would like to be and do, were the society more open. Or further, a television forum showcasing the population of a small German village where the people questioned spoke of their life in the village, their problems, their desires: with the video-tape presented in the Cafe of the village, giving the inhabitants the opportunity to analyze their village and themselves, proceeding from the interviews presented on the little screen. There is, from this point of view, much to invent and to do at the level of individual communication, the level of group, and even of an entire village. This is why such projects have been undertaken.

From the economic point of view, it is clear that such a practice questions the socioeconomic status of art and in particular the status of art in bourgeois society—that of a marketable commodity. Regardless of various public demonstrations, the fact that we don't create for the marketplace is responsible for the problems of our economic status. Not only must we be able to survive, we must also be able to finance our practice. This necessarily implies a profession which assures our material independence vis-a-vis the art market, which involves us in the daily regiment and constraints of society—that which the traditional ivory tower of the artist living in his/her studio often forbade. And this supposes that we obtain, in certain cases, fees for our work, like an actor or a musician: we must vie for this, while always guarding against selling out to the system. Also in certain cases, we can seek funding from universities and research organizations for a survey/study of a population or other works. But we are not sure that the private character of American universities satisfies this need, which in France is nothing more than a dream, certainly not a reality.

In any case, the affirmation of Picasso, according to which the artist must not have a "second profession", is no longer true. As we have seen, the institutional problem is closely tied to the economic problem of art. In our country, where we are going to have a Pompidou Museum (not devoted to this president, but given his name …), with an enormous budget, destined to assure the cultural prestige of bourgeois society, the strategy of art vis-a-vis institutions is a very important problem: the denunciation of this museum/cathedral by the collectif d'art sociologique is not enough to handle this problem.

To introduce deviances into the constraining social system, to divert the habitual use of surveys, to interfere with the mass media in order to introduce there (blank space in the newspaper, silence on the radio, hole in a television show) the possibility of a feed-back, to validate the different forms of marginal communication: these are the tasks that respond to the objectives of sociological art. To tell the truth about art—that is, to make evident its ideological mystification (by that we mean the *hygiene of art)*, to denounce its real political function; this is why we have developed approaches like tearing up works of art, the hygiene of masterpieces, of museums, galleries and art critics.

This is the current strategy, linked to a theoretical urgency for a sociological, materialist analysis of art ideology and function, a goal towards which too few of us are working.

Paris, France

ART-LEARNING

DAVID RUSHTON & PAUL WOOD

Bearing in mind that some years ago, in 1968, there appeared to be a considerably heightened critical awareness about to emerge from art schools, it perhaps would not be amiss to offer a speculation as to why we are still going over this ground. An article written by two participants, which appeared in a radical collection of essays at the time, ended on quite a hopeful note, claiming that art and art education are in possession of certain features—notably "creative collective action"—which are of value to a broader critical or revolutionary movement, in fact that this "concept of education as a shared creative task" generates the kind of "collective action to which all revolution aspires". Writing now, several years after the ephemeral optimism of 1968 it would seem that, far from rushing to offer itself as a model for transformational activity, that art and art education, and potential activists in those spheres, had better start by admitting there is more to learn than to give.

There are some interesting points with respect to the so-called 'six basic theorems' arising out of the Hornsey students' demands. With respect to the first ("There is no dividing line between the so-called fine arts and design, and compartmentalised education is therefore irrelevant") the problem of isolation vs. functionality is not reducible to an either/or over design: 'function' is as strongly ideological as it is technical. More light is shed on the angle of their criticism of specialisation by the third thesis: "Specialisation is undesirable during this period of accelerating technological development, as techniques studied at school will be outdated before the student can apply them". The conclusion they draw from this (thesis 4, that "the aim of art/design education should be to produce generalists and not specialists") is in itself unexceptionable, but the point is that the rationale for this correct conclusion as expressed in the third thesis, needs questioning: the argument against specialisation is not an instrumentality, at any rate not of that order. Whether specialist techniques are obsolete or not, the point is a more fundamental ethico-social one concerning the aims of education and the role of people educated by that system; the suggestion being that the techniques—if any—which are a desideratum are those generating critiques of ideology, rather than their perpetuation in one technological form or another. And specialisation is the main factor leading away from the former and bolstering the latter inasmuch as it by definition reduces study to an explicitly parameterised area and rules out (or with e.g. 'general studies' in mind, reduces to a peripheral, shadowy area) questions falling outside such bounds. It encourages non-reflexivity with respect to foundations and inherited hierarchies of values— and it is because of this orientation, rather than any merely pragmatic difficulty, that specialist practice and its educational sanction is undesirable.

The' limitations on the prescriptions and analyses offered in 1968 are further shown in the terms of reference of the authors: again this is applicable to the idea of a generalised practice versus a specialistic one, this time in a specifically 'art' context. They apparently believed that it was "the move of the 'fine arts' away from the old message-in-a-frame towards abstract total environments" which "made the need for changes in educational practice

GENERAL STUDIES
???

The CRITICAL PAPER is a clear contradiction. Most people see it as a bureaucratic imposition with no relation to their work. What's more un-critical than going around fulfilling demands just because they're there?

'General Studies' isn't wholly to blame. What is, is the institutional division of courses so that some parts are seen as wholly practical, others as wholly theoretical (these latter are usually intended to provide 'background material' of a 'general' nature):

The practices of painting, of sculpture, of film, of industrial and graphic design (etc) in their various forms are importantly theoretical and ideological in a way that tacking on a notion of 'General Studies' just can't resolve.
On the other hand, the idea of general studies embodies a practical aspect above and beyond the people in General Studies Departments (sic) tackling their various specialisms.

It's out of this gulf that obviously time-wasting lip-serving spuriously individualistic nonsense like the Critical Paper is generated. But that's only the tip of the iceberg - think of the years of boring seminars and irrelevant slide-shows that never touched the collective problems of being involved in art education.

If you're critical of the relation of General Studies to other courses, and what that implies about the education you're getting (or if you prefer to think of it as - the work you're doing) come to...

THE MUSIC ROOM, MAIN BUILDING

THURSDAY 13th NOVEMBER 2.30.pm

more and more pressing". Now in retrospect this might seem merely amusing, but language like that goes a long way towards explaining why things went wrong. It seems to be implied that problems with the *weltanschauung* of easel painting contributed to the conditions of dissent—fair enough. More important is that it certainly does not seem to be understood that "abstract total environments" (which is a horrendously sloppy term) *qua* a new orthodoxy are precisely an index of the ethos *against* the terms of which dissent has now to be made; rather, if anything at all is implied, it is that they provide the bases for dissent—and nothing could be further from the truth as the years since then have shown. Areas of practice like stylistic conceptual art have been institutionalised into departments (for example, the soi-disant 'Environmental Media' at the R.C.A.) which are arguably among the most quiescent in a definitively quiescent sector of educational activity—grounded as they are in the resolutely individualistic shift from 'old fashioned' expressive modes to the technological romanticism of multi-media.

In short, as far as much of the failure of the 'classical' dissent of 1968 goes, it can be said that its language and categories now betray it as a symptom of the disease of which it believed itself to be the cure: mistaking surface issues for deep contradictions (e.g. the substance of the six theses) and significant transformations (in the case of the chatter about 'environments'). The upshot was that orthodoxy survived—in a more resilient and sophisticated form. Clearly *it* learned; has dissent?

One thing which is not in dispute about the analyses which were offered at that time is the accuracy with which they pinpointed the emergence alongside private individualism of a hard-headed attitude, predominantly in design departments—'young pro on the make' The result was that through such departments colleges "have become more crudely and directly linked to the demands of a certain sort of industry than any other part of the educational system". The true significance of this penetration, and the expansion of courses to meet it, only becomes clear in context.

Monopoly capitalism is as unplanned as competitive capitalism, with the working of the system still being the result of the self regarding actions of the units comprising it i.e. the market is still the nexus of the system. Under oligopoly conditions the impetus to competition is not in any way weakened, and in theory this centers as in competitive capitalism on price cutting and cost cutting. However, because of the peculiar characteristics of oligopoly, when a limited group of large traders share the potential of a given market, the competitive weapon of price cutting becomes effectively abandoned (with certain exceptions). The result is that competition has to be carried on in other sectors of the business enterprise—most notably in the sphere of the 'sales drive'. This is where some of the ramifications of practices like graphic and industrial design, not to mention fashion design, begin to become accessible in terms of the economy as a whole. But there are complicating factors which in turn have to be taken account of to get the full measure of the present social role of such practices. Such a factor is that of costs. Given that prices cannot be cut in the drive to improve profit margins, costs can. As Baran and Sweezy point out, on the face of it the tendency of monopoly capitalism to reduce production costs would seem to imply that it is a rational and progressive system. But the point is that the reduction of costs is inextricably bound up with—is in fact done in order to bring about—a rise in profits. And profits are not, of course, beneficial for society as a whole. The upshot is that whereas in classical and Marxist economics, based on an atomistically competitive system, analysis shows the tendency of profits to fall, in the case of a monopoly capitalist system the profit-oriented drive for cost cutting (with technological assistance) and the sales drive to increase consumption, make it possible to formulate a 'law' to the effect that, on the contrary, surplus tends to rise as the system develops.

If surplus rises, the main problem is how to absorb it, in that if surplus is not absorbed, the effect is basically that it is not produced i.e. the economy does not run to capacity, there is unemployment, etc. It has been shown that neither consumption, investment nor waste, either individually or taken together,

are adequate to this end of surplus absorption; the implication then is that the system which generates these contradictions should collapse. It would have done so already—it is in fact doing so now, before our eyes—if not for the presence of counteracting forces. Externally, as it were, the occurrence of wars is such a force (that it is in fact the only ultimately successful one is indexed by this 'external' factor's growing internalization—in the form of burgeoning arms economics). The corresponding and complementary internal force, once it is conceded that simply cutting back is too crude a remedy, and anyway only in the end exacerbates the situation, is that constellation of activities which try to stimulate demand: to make up for the inherent tendency to under-invest and therefore to stagnate, by extending demand, and at the same time of course, absorbing some surplus in the activities themselves. The monopoly capitalist system achieves this through a vastly expanded sales effort, taking in promotion, advertising, variations in appearance, packaging, model changes. This sector therefore supports the whole weight of the irrational and contradictory monopoly capitalist system: if it was taken away that system would collapse all the quicker. But, and this is an important point, production 'proper' and consumption oriented activity have become so intertwined that such a clean separation is no longer possible.

This context is the key to understanding a lot of what goes on in art colleges under the name of e.g. 'industrial design', 'graphic design', 'fashion design', 'automotive design', 'interior design', 'design research', etc. These activities form an integral, in fact indispensable part of an economic system. Yet for a number of culturally embedded reasons of both a particular and a general nature (think of the spurious familiarity of literature such as The Hidden Persuaders (a psychologising of the problem again), the legacy within the college context of pop art (as well as the sheer weigh t of exposure, etc.), there is a tendency for art school 'sophisticates' to reify advertising and other aspects of the sales effort into 'Iikeablc', 'fascinating', etc. phenomena—i.e. objects.

The implication being either that it is natural, *qua* unavoidable, unalterable background; or else that they are in some way capable of handling it. But that is precisely what is not provided in the education—an ability to recognise, let alone maintain a critique of ideologies. All this is subsumed to a veneer of technical proficiency; and whatever else these problems are, they are not technical——and they are not amenable to articulation by minds which are trained to interpret the world in exclusively psychological and individualistic terms. Basically, these people do not see advertising and sales-prompted neology as contentious; it is rather just the norm. One can only count this as a tremendous success for the oligarchic interests of the corporations—very restricted interests, let it be said—and also as one more index of the inadequacy of an art and design education, i.e. that advertising, design, styling, etc. are not seen as objectionable symptoms of a particular social and economic order; that advertis*ers*, styl*ers*, etc. do not see themselves as utterly subservient and unquestioning with respect to the ends of that order, simply in virtue of their function within it.

Practically all of that which passes for sophistication in the face of the culture of sales, newness—whether it be clothes, cars, music, or whatever—is merely a mask for resignation; a resignation of which the bearers are wholly unaware. That attitude is about as close as it is possible to come to a paradigm of false consciousness: when it is possible to distinguish very clearly between an individual's (institutionally prompted) assessment of his position and attitude, and his objective function in terms of a socio-economic system.

A good example to wrap up what we are talking about here is given by this bit of discourse from a post-graduate industrial design student. After describing some transparently trivial project he had been working on, he went on to offer the following, presumably as apologetics: "I know I could always work out a justification if I really had to, but I mean, we'll all be in industry soon won't we; and when we're in industry we'll be *given* projects to design, and we won't have to think about justifying them". We're' not making this up—the incident actually took place; and the really deadening point, is that to his peers the

sentiment seemed to be quite normal!

The preceding has had a thread to it, and an important one insofar as it attempts to set the ideological context, to secure it, and to mark out some of the particular dilemmas/ implications of making art the focus. But it still leaves a number of significant points unarticulated. It is possible that some of what is included here will to some people seem redundant, merely echoing existing criticisms of such activities as sociology, economics, etc. and not adding to them—criticisms of which such people will already be aware. But the significance of this is to place such criticisms together, and to contrast them with an equivalent *absence* of foundational ideology critique vis-a-vis practice; further, to show that art practice is equivarently ideological, and that the *same* ideologies are involved.

The point of this is not to salvage or 'reclaim' art from its ideological status but to lay ground for, and in some transitional sense actually to constitute, the transcendence of bourgeois limits on practice.

In looking at such 'relatedness', some gaps in the foregoing stand out. They are among the most important in sorting out a coherent and traceble purchase on orthodoxy, as orthodoxy; and simultaneously in going on.

An assertion of the overriding triviality of contemporary art practice and the barren nature of the 'education' associated with it is likely to usher in the outraged variety of mysticism which wants to claim an eternal necessity for art. An irony should be noted here: Those who purport to consider art closest to the point of production—magazine writers, critics, teachers (students?)—seldom develop a consideration of art as a form of production *vis a vis* other forms, and their relation in terms of the whole social matrix.

On the other hand, those who *do* aspire to discuss art in general, aestheticians and philosophers of art, quite simply do not seem to be talking about the same sad phenomenon which daily passes before one in colleges, galleries, etc. This divisiveness is not of course unique to art—it is a characteristic bourgeois handling of all forms of production: failing to draw connections, failing to relate part to whole, failing to provide the bases for a far reaching criticism of the practice (and by extension, of its shallow 'criticism'). In the context of economics, Baran and Sweezy offer a pointer as to why this should be—simply that a reintegration of the isolated levels of analysis which have grown up has effects' nothing short of devastating to capitalism's claims to be considered a rational social order which serves to promote the welfare and happiness of its members". It would be a mistake to think that because of its ingrained peripherality the culture sphere could not support this weight of explanation. The irony resides in a curiously inverse relation. The economic—capitalist or socialist—is fundamental to social forms. Baran and Sweezy register the unhappy recognition by economists of the gap between the requirements of this complex whole and their divisive practices of explanation, by ascribing the unwillingness to reintegrate levels of theory to the 'apologetic character' of bourgeois economics. How curious then that the single most obvious feature of bourgeois aestheticians' descriptions of their, by any standards, socially trivial object domain (i.e. bourgeois cultural production) should be a self-congratulatory pompousness. Theoreticians of a domain inescapably crucial even under capitalism index their false consciousness by a practice of apologetics; those of a domain which capitalist relations of production have trivialised have resorted to claims of a startling hollowness. In both cases, from base and superstructure, bourgeois theory has falsified the whole image—but in opposite ways: on the one hand by a tacit acknowledgement of inadequacy in the face of the complex significance of the object domain, on the other by spuriously vaunting it and themselves—to a prominence it simply does not possess, in the state in terms of which it is practiced.

Whether cultural production or more straightforwardly economic production is being discussed positivistic theory is incapable of transcending its ideology: the holistic force of economics, shaped by its parts and shaping the whole of which it is a part, is denied in order to promote or preserve an image of democratic and political equality; the superstructural, and therefore dependent, force of culture is glossed in the name of timeless values. These two

shadowy altars are consecrated to the same—all too concrete—god. *Viz.* the preservation of a society harbouring radical inequalities at the economic level, by obstructing any perception of the interrelations and relative forces in and through base *and* superstructure which perpetuate that condition. A general note on method is accessible from this example: it is a fairly standard manoeuver of dialectical theory to note 'correspondences' between phenomena in apparently disparate (e.g. to a purely analytic approach) domains, whether directly (Benjamin) or in a mediated way attempting to take account of the base/superstructure (Adorno). By extension an underlying unit can often be found when two practices, actions,statements, etc., which share some common feature are the apparent opposite of one another. For example, bourgeois economic theory and aesthetic theory share an analytical orientation—yet one is 'apologetic' as a practice, while the other acts as though its object domain were (literally, sometimes) God's gift; despite this they inhabit the same teleological space. The point is that a quasi-phenomenological disparity grounded on methodological similarity can often serve to illustrate the unity of ideology: a unit inaccessible from a consideration of the 'disparate' domains only.

Bourgeois aesthetic theory needn't concern us too much. All that matters is that it takes concepts such as 'art activity', 'artistic expression', 'the aesthetic attitude', and so on, as the given, and proceeds to classify and re-classify on the assumption that there is something going on which it is useful to talk about in that way. All too often these posterior descriptions end up as prescriptions about what can 'count'; when that step overtly is not taken, as with Wittgensteinians, the problems are no less enormous insofar as 'that which has already taken place' is reified as the (only) object about which talk has to revolve. Even when the legitimacy of some of these grand categories is questioned (cf. George Dickie's 'Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude') one gets no nearer to a critical approach to the historical function of those categories either as constructs in the ideological game played by the intellectuals who manipulate them, or as the norms which because of their incessant championing and implicit legitimation, feed back to mystify and restrict the practitioners' conceptions of the limits of their game(s).

As for us here, this is a good enough reason for not continuing to classify and debate over the relative merits of this or that aesthetic argument. We would then be cast into the same reifying role. It would be indicative of the worst kind of gap between theory and practice to chatter about context and its constraints while acting purely academically. Aesthetics is not something which goes on in a rationalistic Parnassus. Paradigmatically it goes on in philosophy journals, postgraduate seminars, etc.—i.e., it is a fragment of characteristically institutional discourse which cannot be separated from the contexts out of which it emerges. *To be in a position* to discuss the 'aesthetic experience' (sic) presupposes social relations which are inimical to the common accessibility of this—so it is said—enjoyable, pleasurable, or humanistically essential state of affairs: *in a word it presupposes privilege.* To devote energies to the characterisation of that state of affairs is to entrench that privilege because it means

that those energies are being diverted away from a consideration of the social relations in terms of which alone that state becomes an existential possibility. Most of those who so argue will profess to a belief in the value of culture (likely enough its perennial, timeless value), in the necessity of freedom; they will probably accord this experience status as a summit of human powers of perception and understanding which transcends the rational but surpasses sensuality—and furthermore transcends the practical constraints of action-in-the-world; it thereby being held out as a paradigm of equality, something which all potentially possess, and which all can share irrespective of age, education and class.
But in so concentrating on the *experience* removed from the conditions upon which it relies, they covertly further the inequalities characteristic of those conditions. To spend time talking about one thing is to spend that time not talking about another; to utter and systematically . ignore the conditions which make that utterance possible, is to *use* those conditions. In the case of aesthetics and

aestheticians, that is to use *their* privilege to further *their* speculations with no thought that the existence of that privilege vitiates their equalitarian, libertarian and humanistic protestations. That is, to discuss aesthetic experience, qua experience is to be guilty of self-deception. Self deception involves two principal roles. One is deceived: in this case one is deceived by the system of privilege in which one is embedded into making remarks whose only possible social function is an apologia for that privilege, irrespective of their pretentions. On the other hand one is simultaneously the deceiver. In this respect one deceives those who lack the necessary conditions for experience by implying that it is available, when in reality they are debarred from it by the most stringent of barriers. So much for the psychological sphere; the point is that there are many who discuss the 'aesthetic experience' —and the sociological counterpart of self-deception is ideology. Ideology, while purporting to encounter theories, principles, arguments, in the disinterested service of understanding (rationality) actually functions to serve the group in whose interests the utterances are made. For 'group' it is possible to substitute, if we re-assemble the fragments of intellectual division of labour, 'class', which prompts the thesis: *aesthetics-qua the discussion and attempted characterisation of 'the aesthetic experience '—is a class ideology.*

Galashiels, Scotland.

CORRESPONDENCE & NOTES

Dear *Fox:*

After thinking more about your second issue I have arrived at the following conclusions. The movement from stylistic concept art to theoretical concept art represents a growth in awareness about the medium. Less concretion, more abstraction. Translation of the concrete into the abstract. Theorizing about what the concrete means, additionally. But you are still in the realm of contemplation. Which means more words. It seems to me that the next step—if you are following out the logic you seem to be following—is Marx thesis XI of Theses on Feuerbach: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it."

You are at an interpretive stage—which may or may not lead to change. But which isn't directly engaged in change.

I think Marxist art, which is mostly Russian, Cuban, Polish, Chinese art, has to be evaluated, and honestly. A Marxist system of art may be in effect more detrimental to art than the American systems. And I do not think that social minded art critics in this country, and political critics, leftist largely, have given enough consideration of American's freedom of speech. We do have freedom of speech here, which they, the communists, mostly do not have there.

Some time ago, in several letters of mine, I pointed out how Wittgenstein equated meaning and use. And he says don't look for the meaning, look for the use. Which would explain why so many people have trouble figuring out the meaning of much of modern art and art in general, especially those art products which often only try to confuse and/or obfuscate us: these products are too often products of mystification and the onus is always placed on the viewer who is assumed to be naive and not knowledgeable: this is our custom. But if we look for the use instead of the meaning we find that much of modern art and art in general is useless and therefore meaningless. No one has shown much interest in this point so far. None in fact.

I do myself, nevertheless, believe that form has meaning by itself. Like games and systems and organization. And play has value. And invention. I would rather not expand on these things at this time. I see many problems arising from the difficulties of conceptualizing the concretions of art.

Ramsden, though Gilbert-Rolfe and his type of criticism need exposure and critique, I thought you were a little too harsh.

Sincerely,
Robert Witz

New York, New York

GET GILBERT-ROLFE AS YOU CAN WILLY NILLY RAMSDEN

Marxist prose has always struck me as being as 'purple' as it is red. It has coupled obstruse historical and economic references with good slogans for the masses. Thus, Willy Ramsden you have precedent in 'the fold' for your own not so brief obfuscations as you try to fathom Jeremy Gilbert Rolfe's writing.

If Jeremy Gilbert Rolfe is academic about his Marxism, you are surely "lumpen" about yours. J.G.R. uses Marxist method because its dialectic provides him with a useful system for the dissection of cultural development. Necessarily his discussion is restricted to the field of art. If there is a flaw in this position,

it may lie in the treatment of art as an independent system. Should it not be workable to use Marxism in this way, then the worst J.G.R. can be accused of is fractionalism. It may be the only correlative between Marxist theory and art, if art is to be kept intact as a meaningful cultural institution. That is—the development of meaning in art must derive from within it's own parameters and have self-reflexive criteria that evolves with art's own changes.

Your 'lumpen' Marxism strikes me as more regrettable. You left England at a time when (for a Marxist) conditions there are fomenting an art directed towards the community; when the general class situation has become more fertile for the creation of a new art allied with a new Criticism. Does this not indicate a thorough lack of appetite for action on your part? Your coming to America to found a new art magazine—with all the theoretical paradoxes that in itself contains vis-a-vis Marxism further places you in the camp of lumpen intellectual agitators.

On style: Your Henry Millerisms peppered with Popperisms are as much a boat ride as J.G.R. train ride that worries you so much.

And J.G.R. fancy footnote-riety i.e. juxtaposing Marden Newman Cezanne is no worse than your own pastiching Ramsden Ian Burn Nelson Goodman. Are you, Mel Ramsden a worker writing your pieces between whistle stops? You cannot but be a part of "the little fuckers" group that equate studies in social critique with Marxist action.

Finally to the essence of your position: Do you believe that the National Endowment for the Arts which subsidizes *Fox*, would do so if you were a genuine alternative? Do you think that Lizzie Borden or other inside/outside stars would contribute to your journal if you did not reverberate within the incestuous art community? Lizzie Borden admires your stance. You print her fingerwagging, eye winking rap. Sure, why not? It's all in the family. May I refer to you as my good friends, or to lift a phrase from J.P. Morgan, would you cross the street with me next Saturday afternoon at … say West Broadway & Spring, huh? Joshua Neustein

Abu Tor, Jerusalem

Dear Fox:

We thought you might want to print this in *The Fox*.

Position paper for the HARD TIMES BILL OF RIGHTS to be read at the Cultural Workers Workshop of the National Hard Times Conference in Chicago on Saturday, January 31, 1976.

- This is a call for a Bill of Rights for Artists.
— As artists, we are tired of being kicked around, treated as archeological finds, anthropological oddities, buffoons for the rich and entertainers for the movement. We are tired of being interpreted, and re-interpreted, analyzed, falsified, computerized, classified, categorized, sanitized, institutionalized, imprisoned, sterilized and forced into America's insane asylums.
— As people, we are tired of being niggerized, ostracized, commercialized and ossified.
— As people, we use the language of art.
— As artists, we speak for ourselves.
— As artists, we must have civil rights.

*

— Face reality: art is liberation.
— The antithesis of art is oppression. If you are an oppressor, you are not an artist: you are either a businessperson, or a murderer, or a machine, or a "good American".
— If you call yourself an artist, and are engaged in denying others their civil rights through your art activity, by being racist, sexist, inhuman or subjectively manipulating other human beings-you are an oppressor.
— If you call yourself an artist, and accept, overtly or covertly, to be manipulated, to be censored, or to censor yourself, or permit yourself to be used as a conveyor of oppression, either through government or corporate grants, or through government or corporate cultural exchanges—you are an oppressor.
— Liberation is not a question of esthetics.
— Esthetics is a personal choice. *What*

you do with the esthetics, *is* a question of liberation. There is no excuse for oppression, whether it is job, security, status, advancement, tenure, sales, fame, personal gratification, money, ego, peer acceptance, or any conscious or subconscious motivation.

— Artists, stop fooling yourselves. We will not permit ourselves to be "good Americans" for the expediency of totalitarianism.

*

— Teachers of the arts, historians of the arts, critics of the arts, esthetes, anthropologists, archeologists, librarians of the arts, curators, editors of the arts, administrators of the arts, and whomever,

— art mongers:

— Hands off! Stop masturbating art, and stop imposing your orgasms on others. Your "benevolent acts" are destroying not only art but people. ,

— You are suffocating thought. You are manipulating the minds of all those who come in contact with you and your activity. You deify and you vilify images and symbols, and therefore their creators, people.

— Let art speak for itself and stop speaking for art.

*

— There are those in government and there are those in the movement, who want to suppress freedom of expression for the sake of expediency;

— There are those in government and there are those in the movement, who want to suppress dissident art and artists who speak out about issues of life and death, oppression and repression, racism and sexism and inhuman behavior to other human beings.

— There are those in government and there are those in the movement who want to shut up artists and their art which speaks out about the cultural crimes of the oppressors;

— There are those in government and there are those in the movement who want to impose their way on art and artists because they think they know "the way";

— There are those in government and there are those in the movement who want to put boundaries on art and artists, muzzle their art and cage its content.

*

— We, as artists, will continue to:
Shout fire when there is fire,
Shout rape when there is rape,
Shout genocide when there is genocide.

*

—Let artists speak for themselves.
—Let Art become a part of liberation.

John Hendricks, Jean Toche, Guerrilla Art Action Group

New York, New York

Dear Foxes,

In one sense your journal/community is brilliant. Page 'Minus 4' and 140 prompted us to write to you. On page 140 Karl mentions the evils of 'meditation', why? Obviously he hasn't a clue about it. We could show him some techniques he can practice simultaneously with any other activity. This 'special' meditation is ideal for radicals and puts conservatives up shit creek when they try to grasp it in any other way except as part of a more coherent revolutionary practice.

Patriarchal thinking is injected with the disease it hopes to cure. Whilst we do not underestimate the value of your work, the absence of this 'special' meditation is painfully obvious.

YOU MUST LEARN TO MEDITATE! not because you're lousy at your jobs (quite the reverse) but because it will deepen and strengthen the community in more ways than we can possibly imagine.

It would be a great shame (a disaster!) if the subject were to be dismissed so superficially. Likewise feminism. Who you refer to in considering these subjects will of course determine what's said about them.

If we insist that the 'essence' of art is what

has been called 'the Mystic Light' it is not to Q.E.D. the problem.

Collaboration around these topics could only be fruitful.

We would more than welcome some indication of interest from you as it is obvious to us at least that some 'mystic union' between *The Fox* and Art-Research should occur.

Art-Research No.2 will contain an 'exposition' on the contents of this letter (amongst other things). May your X-chromosomes surface more often,

Hoping to hear from you soon, Lots of love,
Teresa Kelly
Arthur McDonald
Ruth Lamming
Kevin Roberts
P.S. We've sent a copy of this letter to the people at Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, in case they're in.

Liverpool, England

To *The Fox:*

The first two pages of your journal do not help very much in establishing the credibility of what is printed on the succeeding pages. I was intrigued by your call to "reclaim art as an instrument of social and cultural transformation, in exposing the domination of the culture/administrative apparatus … " On page two I saw evidence—in other contexts it might be called a Freudian slip—that the board of Editors as it is presently constituted are very hung up on issues that might impede or even prohibit attaining the stated goals.

I noticed that you list your assistants in alphabetical order, a traditional capitalist way of dealing with the cipher-aspect of labor. The Editors, on the other hand, are treated differently. They are not listed in alphabetical order, nor are they listed in order of their contribution in the present issue of the journal, but rather in an order which must suggest a special relationship to each other about which the reader is left ignorant. The very fact that the Editors considered themselves as in a significantly different category of being than the workers, yet failed to convey the nature of the difference gave me concern because it suggests an insensitivity to the reader that might be carried throughout the rest of the magazine. As I was thinking about this distinction between Editors and workers it occurred to me that the Editors might be more concerned with "administrative apparatus" than either art or language.

Another detail also annoyed me. You suggest a revolutionary purpose in the euphemism "cultural transformation," and there is a slight Marxist/Socialist association through the books and articles given as reference by your authors, however in contradiction to this you declare "may not be reproduced in any form without written permission." If the Editors were together reproduction by any means would be encouraged as the most natural way of furthering the stated goals, i.e. bringing the word to more people sooner-the-better.

In closing may I congratulate your authors for triumphing (by and large) over the repressive environment I see in the footprints left by the Editors.

Yours with best wishes for future success,
Sincerely,
Weston J. Naef

New York, New York

Dear *Fox:*

The following comments are intended as informative and constructive notes for anyone involved in this dialogue since it is my firm belief that what you have started with your publication is far more important than the simple appearance of the magazine.

1. There is a tendency to become too involved in the linguistics rather than the concepts. The results are a number of ideas muddled in non-descript language.
2. The publication appears almost historical in its presentation, eliminating much of the discourse intended. Most people relating to your thinking are looking for a source, a nucleus of information, with which to relate, not a finalized manifesto.
3. You neglect to present alternatives to the present system and how to achieve

it. As you surely realize, we don't need any "revolutionnaires de salon", but, rather, clear, constructive objectives or we will soon end up in Spain, model 1937; total capitulation.

Respectfully yours
Bertil Petersson

Los Angeles, California

ART AND CLASS: A PERSONAL VIEW

MAY STEVENS

My father was a plumber—or to be more accurate—not skilled enough to be a real plumber, he was a pipe-fitter, never having been trained as a plumber and not having a plumber's license. When he retired from 40 years of maintenance work for the Bethlehem Steel Shipyard in Quincy, Massachusetts, he got a job as a guard in a supermarket.

My mother had to leave grade school because her father died and her labor and pitiful salary were needed at home. She went to work for the mill owners on the hill as a mother's helper. My mother was a very good student in elementary school, loved reading and mathematics, but she never got another chance to learn.

I grew up in Quincy, the daughter of the union of a waitress and a shoe salesman, who later became housewife and pipe-fitter. We lived a few blocks from the shipyard on a street with 2-story, 2-family houses, each family occupying 4 rooms. Every 4th house was the same, but, of course, the color, the trim, the garden or lack of it, made each house different. All around us were Scottish ship-builders or people descended from Scottish shipbuilders, people who were caulkers, electricians, welders, etc.

Within my own family class contempt raised its ugly head. My father despised the Irish Catholics from South Boston, of which my mother was one. My mother's relatives were described to me as slumdwellers living in unclean tenements and as drunkards and papists. My father read sensational little paperbacks with black and red covers that told horrendous tales of orgies within convent walls, and lascivious monks. He had a pre-seventies taste for pornography.

The complexities of working class people seem totally unsuspected by those who call themselves middle class. Their varied psychologies and tastes, the choices they make, the delicacies and subtleties of their lives lost in a blanket depiction. My mother got married in a grey silk dress with an accordian-pleated shawl collar that covered her arms. My father painted and papered his house, the house he owned on that working class street of houses built by the government for the shipyard workers who built destroyers during the first world war. He bought his house for $6000 in 1928.

I always helped him repaint and repaper. I remember the care with which the wallpaper and its matching strip to run along the ceiling were chosen. We liked muted, warm tones, grass weave and a thread of silver—to add a touch of elegance to a living room with over stuffed furniture too large for a 9x12 space .

My father and I slapped the wallpaper paste on the back of the long strips and carefully matched the pattern. He cut a stencil of bell-shapes for a trim for the kitchen. He had very strong color preferences. I once bought a burnt orange suit at Peck and Peck. My father hated it; he called it "shit brindle." When I bought him socks in the same color he refused to wear them.

My father liked poetry. He could recite lines from Keats and Shelley. He also liked "Into the valley of death rode the six hundred" and "I know there are no errors in the Great Eternal Plan/ and that all things work together for the final good of man." He was sexist, racist and reactionary—but he wanted me to

be an artist, and he stole cotton duck from Bethlehem Steel for me to paint on.

A couple of years ago I had some policemen in an evening class I was teaching at Queens College. I assigned 3 museum visits

to the class. One of the policemen asked me after class for the addresses of the Modern, the Whitney and the Guggenheim. He said he was stationed in Brooklyn but was going to be assigned to the Waldorf Astoria during Arafat's visit to the U.N. He would visit the 3 museums on his lunch hour!

The desire of Marxists that artists speak to masses of people through forms accessible to them I see as plain talking down and a form of contempt. Trotsky said "The proletariat is forced to take power before it has appropriated the fundamental elements of bourgeois culture; it is forced to overthrow bourgeois society for the very reason that society does not allow it access to culture." But rather than bourgeois culture it is more accurate to speak of "human culture in a bourgeois epoch" since our culture is based on the entire accumulated experience of all human society since the beginning of human beings. This culture belongs to all of us.

Susan Sontag writes: "It is only normal that we are aware of ourselves in an historical continuum, with indefinite thicknesses of past behind us, the present a razor's edge, and the future—well, problematic is one damp word for it. But dividing time into past, present and future suggests that reality is distributed equally among three parts. But in fact the past is the most real of all." And Trotsky, again speaks of three basic tragedies—hunger, sex and death—besetting humans. Hunger is the enemy that Marxism has taken on.

But sex and death affect us all and artists are moved by all three. The flaw is, of course, that bourgeois society—which ,prefers not to face up to any of these—would wish most of all not to have art deal with hunger (class) and not to have us see the links between the three.

New York, New York

This statement was read at Artists Space as part of a panel on *Art and Class: Some Marxist Viewpoints*, April 9, 1976.

STUDENTS FIGHTING FACULTY AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

JANE KLION & JULIE WOLF

The following article comes from Washington University in St. Louis. Its circumstances are worth considering. For a time, students of the Multi Media department of the School of Fine Arts had been struggling, without success for a measure of student participation in faculty appointments and decisions regarding their department. After repeatedly petitioning against an administration decision which was perpetrated on the students, an impasse was reached. The faculty refused to respond to the student proposal which called for participation in decisions that would directly affect the structure, content and future of their department. The proposal challenged the ideological basis of the institution which sought to maintain the existing power structure. It was soon realized that a dialogue would never be established with faculty who use their positions to justify their right not to be questioned.

In an effort to make other students aware of one way which ideological problems are manifested, a few students wrote the following critique of the annual faculty show at Steinberg Gallery on campus. It was later posted around the campus as well as published as a letter in the student newspaper. It had a considerable impact. Its function was to generate dialogue among students who are separated by the departmental structure of the school and seemingly unaware of the implications of their art education. (Such dialogue could raise issues which) would bring about an awareness as to the relationship between art training and the academic institutionalization which

strives to maintain its position by defending the hierarchical structure.) The critique is an analysis how art institutions determine and reflect particular modes of thought and educational methods. Students must begin to realize this relationship and begin to formulate a critical analysis of their art education. Evaluation is not encouraged by faculty who use their status to justify their silence, thereby discouraging any form of ongoing examination of what is and what could be. What is needed is dialogue which could bring about the exposure of attitudes, opinions, and criticisms, assisting the learning process of faculty as well as students.

Learning, if it occurs at all, is a social experience, a dialogue between 'teacher' and 'student' in which both have much to gain. Fundamental to any teaching is to teach the ability to question. If faculty hide behind the illegitimate 'institutional right' of not responding, they negate the possibility of learning ocurring between themselves and students. It seems student involvement in the decision-making process is crucial if art education is going to move away from its elitist class-oriented values and machinery.

The 1975 W. U. Faculty Art Show is no longer a visible example of the problems that occur when art production originates from within an academic institution. This statement intends to serve as a reminder of these problems which can be clarified by discussing the Faculty Show in its broader context, that is, as a product of a hierarchical institution.

A hierarchical art institution is a means of enculturation, the process whereby individuals are conditioned by, adjusted to, and integrated with the social norms of their society. This implies that in order for such all institution to continue it must perpetuate the distribution of power and the beliefs held by that power. Although this particular art institution on the surface fosters the belief that there is freedom to question, change, experiment and innovate, limitations do exist if one wishes to remain in it. What should be the liberal, creative intentions of this art school are prevented from existing because of its actual regulative methods and practices.

The laissez-faire liberalism of teaching methods which advocates self-expression is immediately replaced by a narrow minded dictatorial stance when self-expression adopts a truly questioning analytic attitude about the beliefs of those who hold power.

The faculty of this art institution, who were themselves produced by other hierarchical art institutions, are channeled into adopting

a specific ideology about power and its beliefs in order to remain within the institution. This creates conformity, a search for security, and an unquestioning acceptance of required attitudes—all traits which are externalized by the faculty's products which were presented in Steinberg Gallery.

The products created by the faculty of the Art School do not transcend the ideology, restrictions, and boundaries of the institution. Instead they are determined by and reflect the values of the environment from which they rose. The products that were in the gallery make no attempt to go beyond what has previously been explored and accepted. They do not address the social, political or deeply personal issues peculiar to our times.

The products take two directions. On the one hand, some reduce themselves to manipulation of form, color, shape—resulting in sensuous but empty abstractions. On the other hand, some of the products draw heavily from an art historical background to gain recognition as an art product. But they no longer pertain to present day issues. The faculty has failed to recognize that the content of past art, when it was effective directly involved itself with contemporary needs and attitudes. They have not understood that past art acquired effectiveness and power by directly confronting social, political, and personal issues pertinent to its times. The faculty misinterpret the main goals of past art by using merely its formal elements (ie. style, technique, materials, etc.) or by arbitarily extracting symbols out of their contexts. The work parodies mere decorative attributes of past art while remaining powerless, unable to challenge or explicate existing conditions. In summary the products represent either a formalism without content, or a content no longer meaningful.

St. Louis, Missouri

NATURAL ALLIANCES

MAYO THOMPSON

People maneuver in ideological space. They can also dislocate its boundaries: 'natural' (and natural) alliances are formed. E.g., Conceptualists and Formalists collide and interpenetrate 'naturally'. Around here the ideological space is sometimes split into principle and practice (protestations to the contrary notwithstanding), a false dialectic that niches everyone in an antinomy of bourgeois thought. Everyone actively or passively is supposed to hold down a bit of real-estate in each. Real dialectical possibility is embedded in the necessity of subverting the *(politically* manifest) enforced division of the social base into form and content. The necessity itself is clearly embedded in the terrain of the contradicted division; the necessity locates the actuality. The 'natural' political result of the division is more of the same dull menu … politics vs. action vs. process vs. dialectics. Our 'natural' alliances reflect the political properties of our sociality in four dimensions. You can gossip about the 'sociological' organization of the terrain all you like; it's just gossip. Our natural alliances are our social base for ideological action. To differentiate between 'natural' (and natural) alliances is to locate the normativity of our "neighborhood": allow for postulation and keep reality in mind. We have somewhere to go and it is at this point that metaphor is eschewed. Thinking that the revolution is for future generations is not realistic, it is, ex post facto, valuation—romanticisation of solitary subsistence grounded on practice *and* principle, intuition *and* intellect and other 'neat' bifurcations. Experiencing temporary success or failure is 'normal' but is useless as a criterion for normalizing any social 'base' as *the* determinant of productive purpose. Expectation is simply precluded by the real presence of enemies. A traditional task is to seek the ideological conditions of change in the social base (and directionality) of our heretofore cherished 'socialization'. It doesn't matter how 'active' our 'socialization' is (or feels): what may appear to the charitable as ruinous dilution is in fact history's least picturesque suicide.

New York, New York

FOR THE SENSITIVE

MAYO THOMPSON

For us sensitive people, the social situation is in bad shape. The working-class is asked by its work to support the apparatus that is built with the fruits of its work. In return the working-class receives *enough* to support only a fraction of its membership. All that is left over after the apparatus has been supported and the working-class has got its portion goes to the founders of and heirs and pretenders to the apparatus. To keep things the way they are the founders, heirs and pretenders go to extreme ends to confuse relations between people—social relations. Sociology and its siblings confirms the imposed working-class dream of moving-up. But, only a few can move up: the competition is stiff. There is a list of basic requirements for moving up. A person who moves up is one who is able to check-off items on the list. Those who set out to complete the list realize that birth, for example, determines to a certain extent where one starts. Take education—education is no problem for some so they can start further up the list. The list is a distraction. It's designed to get people outside themselves so that they are opposed to themselves: working as an 'electrician' is not a social contribution but what a person who works as an electrician is. Participation in the construction of the list is as much an activity of the reformist (and some falsetto revolutionaries) as it is of the capitalist. The list can turn a pig into a dog, if the pig will only

sign the social contract. Historically, members of the working-class have banded together to give force to movements for changing the terms of a putative social project. A process of reformist attrition has been, traditionally capable of making the lot of the working-class better and better.

The working-class and its allies has expressed its certain knowledge that no fixed relations between itself and the superstructural apparatus are realistic. Historically, however, the power that it has to *make history* has been turned against it. It has *had* to re-express its certain knowledge in less compromising terms. Transformation is in no way transformation that can suit us sensitive people.

New York, New York

CORRECTION:

In *Fox* 2 we published excerpts from a paper by Carol Hanisch titled "Male Psychology: A Myth to Keep Women in their Place." The complete version of this paper can be obtained from Carol Hanisch for *25c.* The address in *Fox* 2 is incorrect however. Carol Hanisch's current address is, care of:
REDSTOCKINGS
POST OFFICE BOX 413
NEW PALTZ
NEW YORK 12561

THESES ON AESTHETICS, THE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS SCHOOL, AND THE AVANT-GARDE

STEFAN MORAWSKI

1. Aesthetics has been in difficulties since the humanities, and especially the axiological or value-guided disciplines, arrived at a higher and more sensitive consciousness of their achievements, aspirations and possibilities, and they moreover took the paradigm of the natural sciences as their model of what a science should be. Following the Second World War the Oxford philosophers, soon joined by the American wave of the linguistic-analytical school, set out to confront the dreariness of aesthetics; they largely won the day as they demonstrated that aestheticians habitually and unjustifiably assumed certain essential properties and also their terminology was obscure or confused. The benefits that were gained by this confrontation with aesthetics are by no means negligible. The linguistic analysts brought lucidity to a language which was indeed muddled; and they introduced a necessary uncertainty where previously an assumed simplicity and finality had reigned. Nonetheless, the criticisms of this school failed to provide any constructive propositions. What is more, the side-effects were devastating, for the heritage of major aesthetic issues was swept aside as non-existent or of minor significance, in particular with regard to ontology and philosophic anthropology. At the present,

this school and trend have become as much a matter of antiquarian interest as is the confused assumption of essences *which it combatted.*

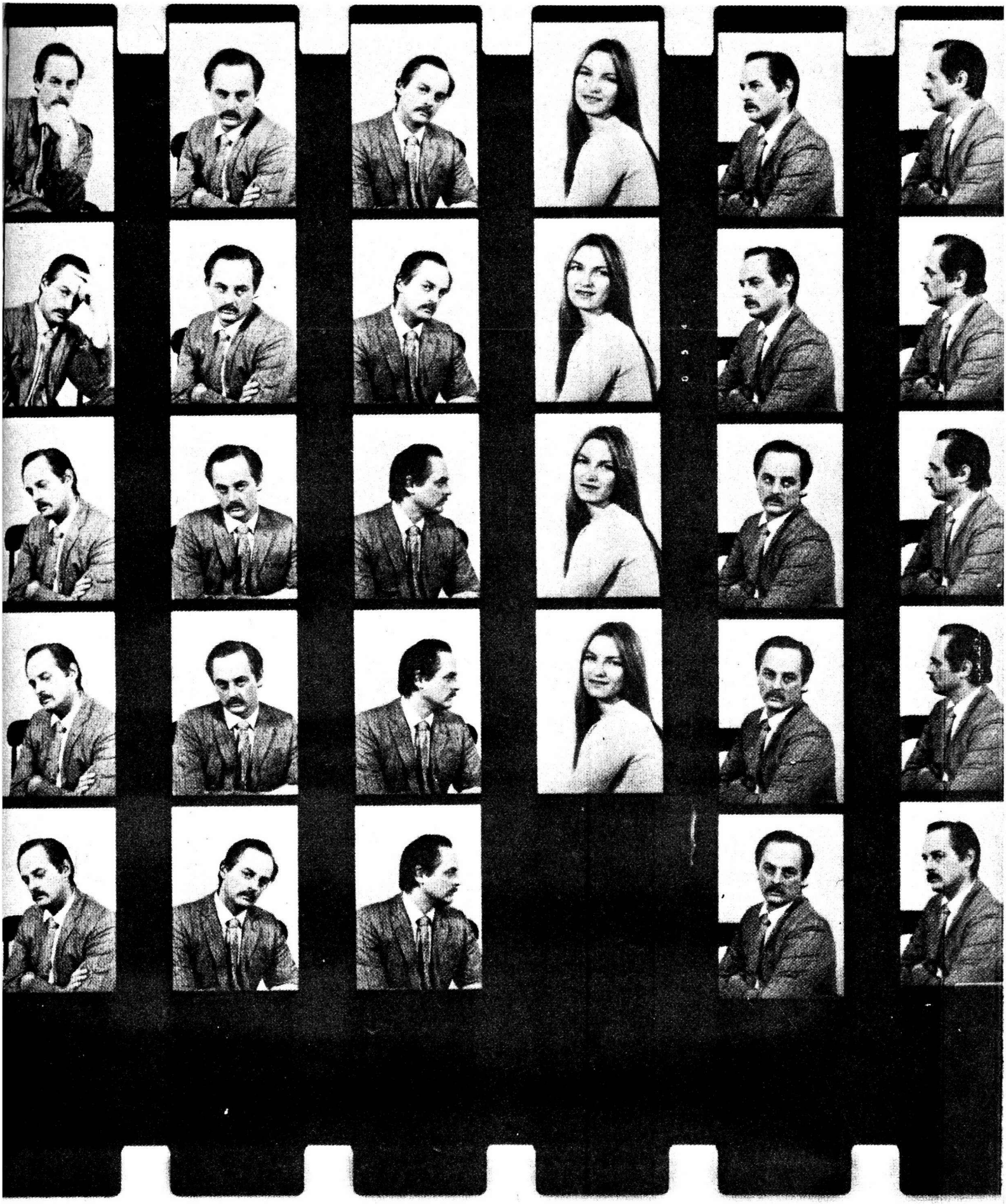
2. The genuine challenge to aesthetics today is presented by the new artistic avant-garde and the criticism that supports it. The crisis in the idea of art is nothing other than the actual symptom of the obsolete character of aesthetics with its assumedly eternal categories of form, expression, mastery (teche), mimesis, and so forth. The telling lesson has been given to aestheticians not by the linguistic philosophers but by the counterculture of today. What's wrong with aesthetics is to be learned primarily from the Situationists, pondering the narcotic spectacles which the civilization of today provides either to make of art a handy commodity or a vast propaganda"parade. Or from the students of Paris at the 1968 barricades, when revolution came to be actualized as a Festival of the Oppressed. Or from the leader of the Amsterdam Provos, van Duyn, with his plan for the Elf State, or from some of the American . artistically countercultural communes.

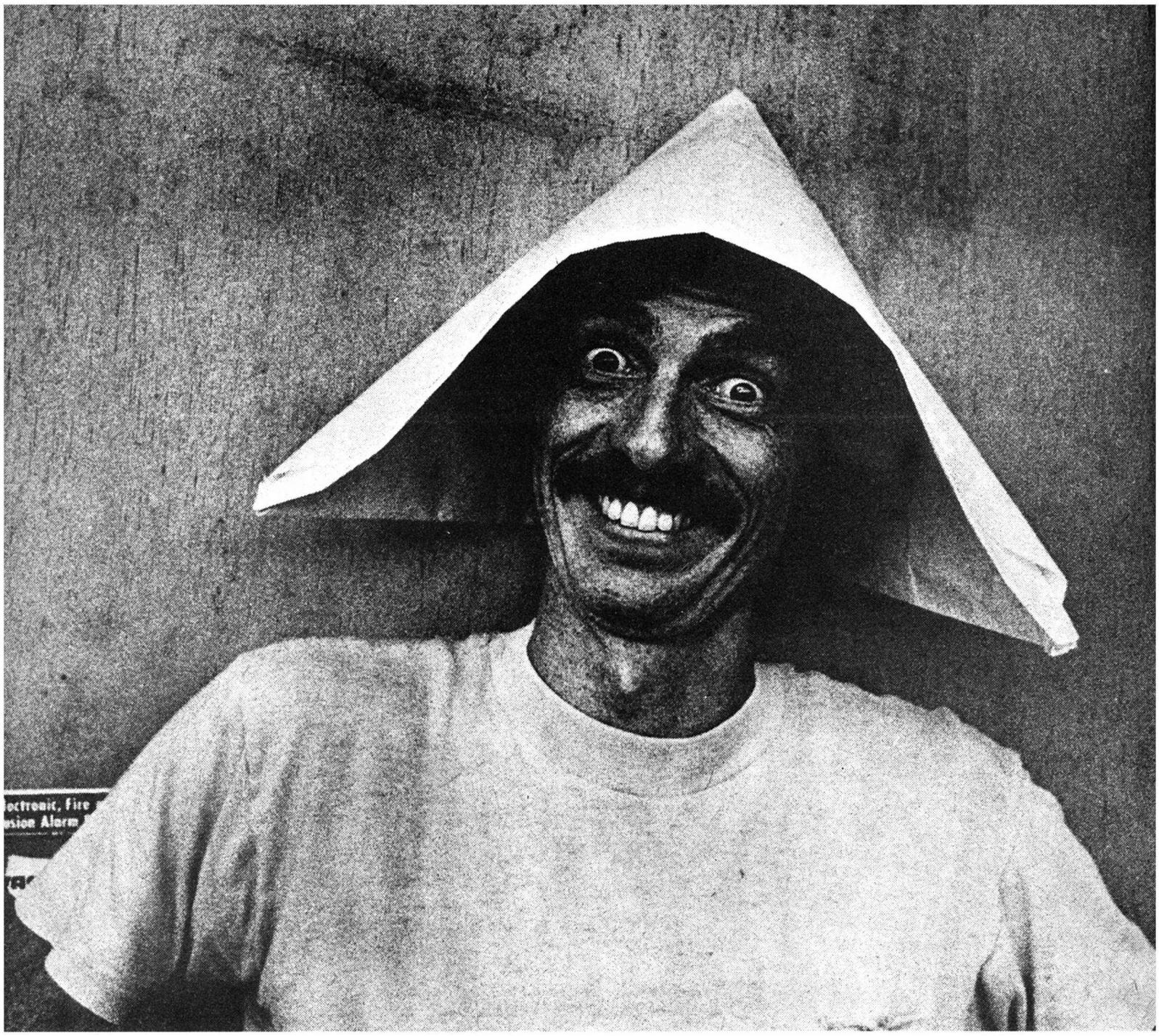
3. Faced with these phenomena, the *philosopher* of *art should, I believe,* focus on the following problems, which I shall delineate only briefly and in a preliminary way: What context of the inherited categories of aethetics has made them irrelevant? Does any part of them remain to be saved? What shall we think of the idea of an all-embracing creativity, which has become the chief premise of the post-artistic manifestos? What is the relation of this notion to the traditional aesthetic categories? Is art really in the process of decline? If it is, is this a positive or negative phenomenon or a mixture of both? If we fail to put the above questions and to venture some tentative answers, aesthetics stands in danger of losing contact with the most advanced, vital and inquisitive artistic phenomena of our time, and thus of becoming more error-laden than it may have ever been.

Warsaw, Poland

our twin masters, art for the few and art for art's sake, are so old-fashioned, so retrograde, so weak now that their terminal clasp on western societies has to give way to more enriching alliances. it is fasinating to me that the road ahead is blocked among us by so many failures of imagination. i know very few artists who can even imagine the possibility of an art which is both good and more widely social, let alone what such an art might look like. my own problem is that i am haunted by our art having become so hopelessly alienated from everyone else. (R.B.Kitaj 1975)

over the past ten years, with numerous experiments, in multitudinous searches, artists have struggled to redirect the creative impulse. a vast number have sought freedom from the obsessions of object-making by turning inward to their own bodies. it is here that many remain, consumed by the isolated impotence of self-analysis. as i see it, the 'transference' of fetishism, away from the object to the body was rather like changing cells in the same prison block. it put us into a different space but in the end offered no real alternative to the inherent isolationalism of the fetishistic 'will to art'. R.B. Kitaj suggests that our art has '. . . become hopelessly alienated from everyone else . . .' . i agree, but would say that the method for breaking through this alienation does not reside in the making of an art which is '. . . both good and more widely social . . .' . for, if it is in fact the artist who wills the art (i believe we can agree that this is the case) it follows then that the art is but symptomatic of the artist. in other words, alienated artists make alienated art. thus, the place to begin work is with the artist not the art. admittedly, our initial move from object to body was somewhat misleading. however, it did open us to the eventual recognition of the body as a vessel for the personality. it remains now for us to fully accept the split in the duality of vessel and content. for it is only in doing so, that we can turn our efforts directly toward the final problem, development of the personality. surely, it is the inevitable result of self-consciousness. (J.Byron Kearns, 1976)





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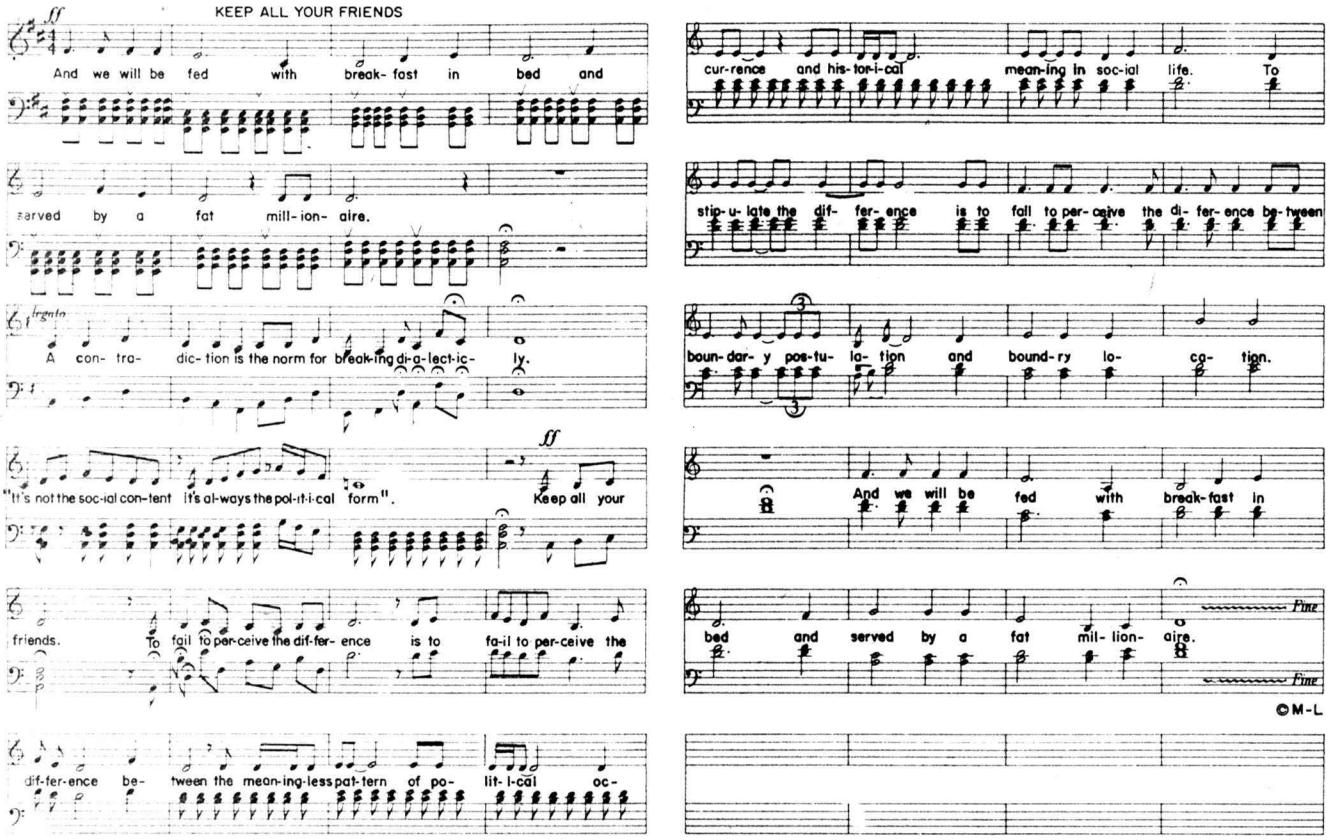
KEEP ALL YOUR FRIENDS
And we will be fed with break- fast in bed and
served by a fat mill- ion- aire.
A con- tra- dic- tion is the norm for break-ing di-a-lect-ic- ly.
"It's not the soc-ial con-tent it's al-ways the pol-it-i-cal form".
Keep all your
friends. To fail to per-ceive the dif-fer- ence is to fa-il to per-ceive the
dif-fer-ence be- tween the mean-ing-less pat-tern of po- lit- i-cal oc-
cur-rence and his-tor-i-cal mean-ing in soc-ial life. To
stip- u- late the dif- fer- ence is to fail to per- ceive the di- fer- ence be-tween
boun-dar- y pos-tu- la- tion and bound-ry lo- ca- tion.
And we will be fed with break-fast in
bed and served by a fat mil- lion- aire.
Fine
Fine
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The distribution of function has brought a reproach to songs which differs from that levelled at 'fine art'. Songs have been expropriated extensively to the sub-sapient leisure industry. It is an illusion that songs have taken to commoditous distribution and media reinforcement somehow inviolate. Songs have become as meaningless as restrictive formalism. And reification is more complete in a world that fetishizes and sells as authentic those edited lumps of venality which are its characteristic output. A song can go-on ... absorbing and denying its own conditions.

Record, Cassette, Song Book. Enquiries to 49 East 1st Street, New York City, 10003 (USA) or, 126 Broughton Road, Banbury, Oxon, England.

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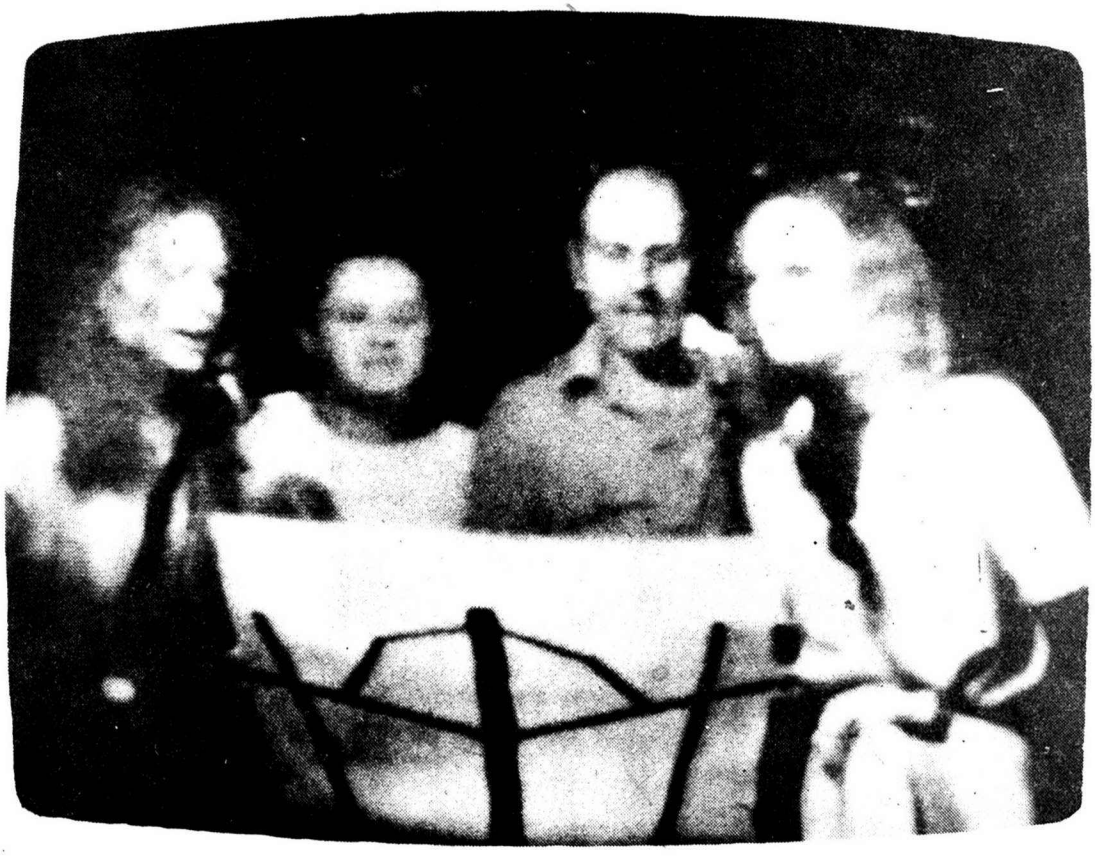
9 GROSS & CONSPICUOUS ERRORS©



Songs on video-tape have all sorts of anomalies. These nine video-taped 'errors' are all songs of going-on. Separate technology reinforces and is an instantiation of capitalist taxonomy. Leaving the music business to 'professionals' adds up to the same thing: the reproduction of capitalist formalisms and control mechanisms. Video-taped songs are not offered to those who can 'necessarily' afford access (though we do want them to go to schools) — we have something to say and a bunch of nobodies to say it to. But history 'frees' us to adapt ... there are real people out there (here) penetrating separate technology with class activism.

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HERESIES IS AN IDEA-ORIENTED JOURNAL devoted to the examination of art and politics from a feminist perspective. We believe that what is commonly called art can have a political impact, and that in the making of art and of all cultural artifacts our identities as women play a distinct role. We hope that Heresies will stimulate dialogue around radical political and esthetic theory, encourage the writing of the history of femina sapiens, and generate new creative energies among women. It will be a place where diversity can be articulated. We are committed to the broadening of the definition and function of art.

HERESIES IS STRUCTURED AS A COLLECTIVE of feminists, some of whom are also socialists, marxists, lesbian feminists or anarchists; our fields include painting, sculpture, writing, anthropology, literature, performance, art history, architecture and film-making While the themes of the individual issues will be determined by the collective, each issue will have a different editorial staff made up of contributors as well as members of the collective. Each issue will take a different visual form, chosen by the group responsible. Heresies will try to be accountable to and in touch with the international feminist community. An open evaluation meeting will be held after the appearance of each issue. Themes will be announced well in advance in order to collect material from many sources. Possibly satellite pamphlets and broadsides will be produced continuing the discussion of each central theme.We are soliciting material in the following areas:

Patterns of Communication and Space Among Women: concepts of inside/outside spaces; fragmentation and networks (architectural, sexual and social) in women's work, lives, conversations, diaries, letters....

Feminism, Art and Politics: the articulation of various feminist ideologies and their relationship to art, esthetics and political theory; the lesbian as ideal feminist; class and art; economic isssues; the audience; fantasy, reality and power...

Women's Traditional Art and Artmaking: decoration, pattern, ritual, repetition, opulence, self-ornamentation; arts of non-Western women; breaking down barriers between the fine and decorative arts; the effect of industrialization on women's work and work processes...

Recurring Imagery in Women's Art, Conscious and Unconscious: identification and creation of female and feminist imagery; sexual and social metaphors; body identification; the iconography of the Great Godess, saints, heroines, witches and whores...

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The Great Goddess: original research into our spiritual past; tracing the temples and analyzing the artifacts, images; remembering, inventing; political and psychological implications of the Goddess; aspects of individual goddesses; ritual...

AS WOMEN, WE ARE AWARE THAT historically the connections between our lives, our arts and our ideas have been Suppressed Once these connections are clarified they can function as a means to dissolve the alienation between artist and audience, and to understand the relationship between art and politics, work and workers. As a step toward the demystification of art, we reject the standard relationship of criticism to art within the present system, which has become the relationship of advertiser to product. We will not advertise a new set of genius-products just because they are made by women. We are not committed to any particular style or esthetic, nor to the competitive mentality that pervades the art world. Our view of feminism is one of process and change, and we feel that in the process of this dialogue with our peers we can foster a change in the meaning of art.

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AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS

PUEBLO FILM PRODUCTIONS

Por la Razon o la Fuerza

Avenue of The Americas

Based on a script by Charles Horman. Produced by Walter Locke. Directed and edited by Jorge Reyes. Distributed by Pueblo Film Productions.

This is a film about the 'Chilean process.' What was that process? It was one of discovery and rediscovery — a reclaiming of Chile's identity for Chileans. National consciousness and human dignity stifled under four centuries of foreign domination, had found its voice again in the struggle to find a new road to economic and social well-being.

Avenue of The Americas has been made to alert North Americans to the real imperatives of United States economic and foreign policy in the Third World in general and Chile in particular. What has transpired in Chile has made it clear that the maintenance of a cheap source of raw materials and labor, as well as a market for the U.S. industrial and consumer goods, is more important than the abrogation of a constitutional democracy and the brutal murder and persecution of 50,000 Chileans. These are the realities of contemporary capitalism in its imperialist stage. We think it is incumbent upon all Americans, as shapers of our own humane history, to recognize and act upon this knowledge.

In its anxiety to maintain the domination no matter what the price, foreign intervention imposed the authoritarian use of power. "A silent Vietnam" is what Salvador Allende called Chile in refering to the U.S. sponsered campaign of low-profile economic warfare that led to his overthrow on September 11, 1973, in the bloodiest military coup in Latin American history. Yet the impact of that momentous event and of subsequent revelations documenting U.S. government and corporate complicity in the destruction of Chilean democracy has largely receded from public consciousness. A casualty of post-Watergate cynicism and media distractions, the Chilean experience remains inaccessible to and misunderstood by most Americans.

Avenue of The Americas is the first feature-length film about Chile to incorporate recent revelations about U.S. complicity in the September 11, 1973 coup d'etat. Extensive footage of Chile during the Allende period is combined with archive material and interviews with politicians and intellectuals who discuss the issue and implications of the CIA and corporate involvement — an involvement that has made it clear that there is only one 'Avenue of The Americas'. Paved with profits, it leads to the commercial capitol of the world.

Avenue of The Amer[illegible]as focuses on the programs of the Popular Unity government between November 1970 and September 1973, and on the popular response to them within the context of Chile's centuries-old stagnation under foreign domination. Numerous interviews with workers, miners, peasants, students and professionals, as well as with members of the opposition to Allende and to the U.S. presence in Chile.

"Workers of my country, I have faith in Chile and her destiny. Other men will overcome this dark and bitter moment when treason seems to dominate. You must never forget that sooner or later grand avenues will be opened where free men will march on to build a better society. Long live Chile! Long live the people! Long live the workers! These are my last words, and I am certain that the sacrifice will not be in vain." President Allende, Avenue of The Americas.

This film grew out of the determination to document the truth of this event for the people of the world, particularly the citizens of the United States, and to prevent this truth from being distorted or buried.

The world must know that thousands have been shot, thousands tortured, and thousands held in concentration camps. But the people of Chile are resisting and will continue to resist the fascist dictatorship and its military rule.

This film was done with an international film team, all of whom had been living and filming in Chile for the previous two years. Charles Horman was murdered by the military and two of the film crew are still in Chile, either hiding or in prison.

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Radical Philosophy is the journal of the Radical Philosophy Group. It aims to avoid the academicism of the existing philosophical journals - an academicism which trivializes philosophy and manifests itself in an uncritical attitude to social ideologies. Radical Philosophy publishes philosophical work contributing to the development of radical theory, and to the exposure of the social and political assumptions embodied in orthodox philosophy. As well as articles and book reviews, it carries critiques of educational institutions, courses and teaching methods; news items and reports of meetings and activities; humour and satire.

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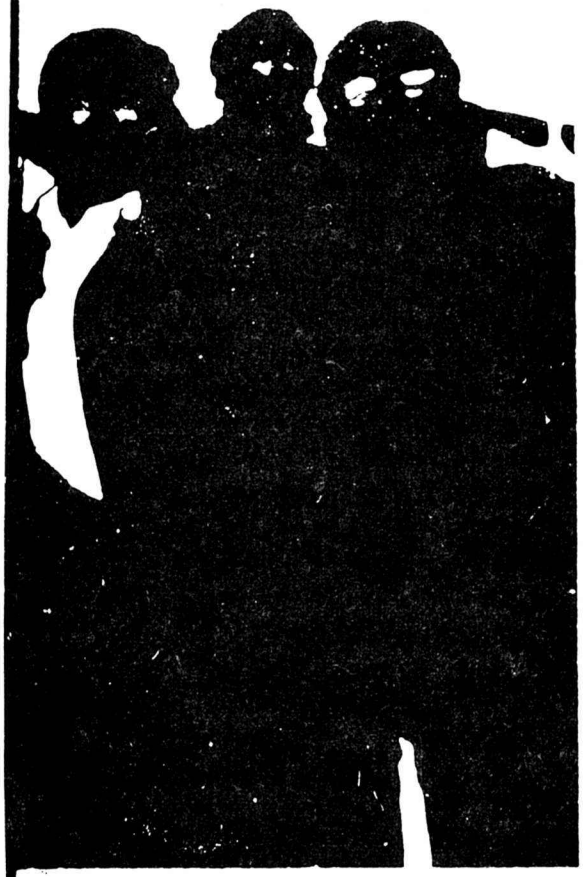

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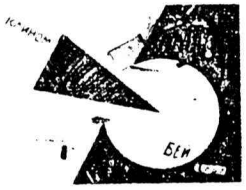

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